Opening the Hidden Land

STATE FORMATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SIKKIMESE HISTORY



BY

SAUL MULLARD

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In memory of
Yab Tashi Thobten,
And Yab Wongchuk Barfungpa

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of the contents of this book first appeared as my doctoral thesis (2009): the product of almost six years of research, which began in the summer of 2003 as preparation for my Masters course at the University of Oxford. It was at that time that I first travelled to Sikkim to study the rich history of that tiny Himalayan state nestled between the Asian giants of China (Tibet) and India. The compilation of this book has at times been extremely difficult, and this final product would not have been possible without the kind and generous help from a number of scholars, friends and associates. In the first instance I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my former doctoral supervisor, current editor and continual friend Prof. Charles Ramble, who took a great deal of time from his busy schedule to read and comment on earlier drafts of this book in both its previous incarnation as a thesis as well as this final published edition. I remain in debt to him for his guidance and support throughout the four years of my DPhil and my preceding Masters year. He spent considerable time with me providing me with essential secondary material and I have always felt that he has constantly strived to improve my work, for which I am extremely grateful.

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NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Throughout this book I have attempted to maintain consistency in the transliteration of Tibetan words. Unfortunately there exists no consensus within the field of Tibetan and Himalayan studies for transliteration conventions, besides the obvious usage of the Wylie system. I have thus decided to use the following conventions, which I must reiterate are far from universally accepted amongst the academic community. All proper names (places, people and titles) have been presented with the capitalisation of the initial and not the radical (*ming gzhi*); with the exception of commonly known terms and place names such as Lhasa, Gangtok, Zhigatse, Chumbi etc., where I have used a phonetic spelling. I have also reproduced names of colleagues or informants according to their preferred spellings. Another exception are those words that begin with an *a chung* prefix, in which case the next letter is capitalised e.g. 'Jigs med. In the case where the individual's name is prefaced with a title e.g. Lha btsun, the initial of the title but not of the other names will be capitalised with one exception: Chos rgyal, which will be capitalised except where it forms part of quoted text. Tibetan literary works have been italicised and the initial is capitalised, and all other terms (including clan names) have been italicised without capitalisation, except when they form the start of a sentence.

There are a number of cases, where alternative spellings are found in literary sources. For these terms (e.g. Mi dpon rab/rabs) I have chosen a single spelling throughout; however, I have presented the alternative spellings for such names or terms with the first appearance of the term in this book. This is a particular problem with proper names of Lepcha origin, which often appear in many variants and so follow the same guidelines for alternative Tibetan spellings. When quoting from a text with a variant spelling I place the spelling used in this book in square brackets e.g. *de nas yog sam* [Yog bsam] *nor bu sgang du byon*.

For the presentation of Tibetan material I have used two conventions. First, passages which appear in the main text are unedited and are thus consistent with the original source. Where there are orthographical *errata* I have placed corrections in footnotes. Second, passages which appear in footnotes are unedited. This is to avoid cumbersome footnotes while the nature and composition of errors are in any case often apparent through the translations or from the context.

Sanskrit terms are represented using the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration. Proper names (e.g. Nāgārjuna, Mahāyāna, Vajrapāṇi etc.) and important nouns (such as Buddha, Bodhisattva, and Tathāgata etc.) appear with capitalisation and no italics; all other terms, unless they form part of a title, are in italics and without capitalisation (e.g. *maṇḍala, dharmarāja, ḍākinī*).

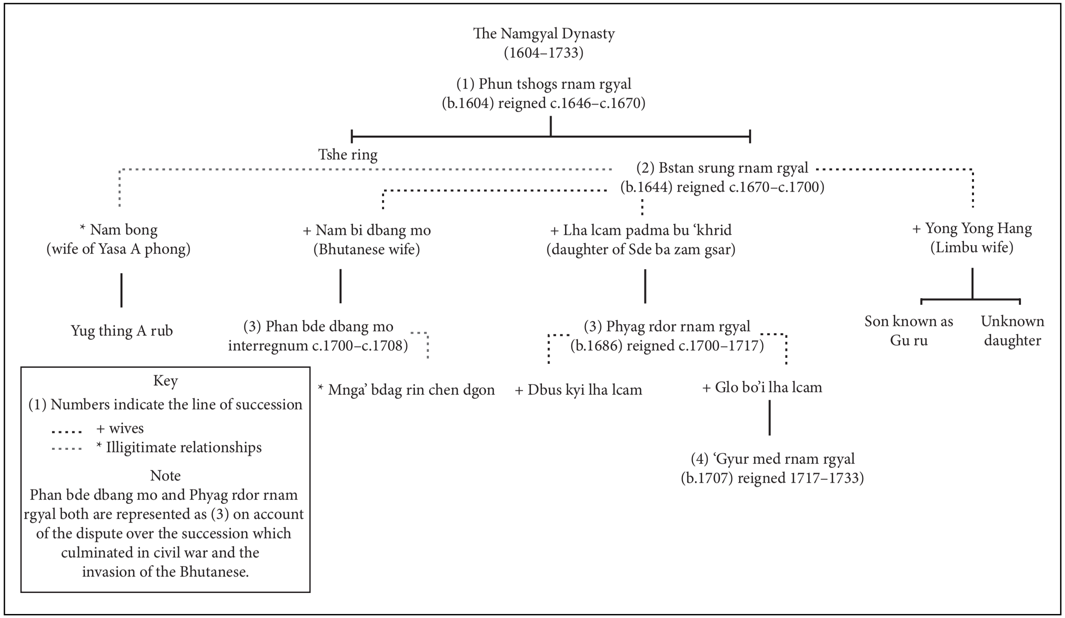
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BGR	*'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs*
BMS	*Bla ma che mtshan gsum 'bras ljongs sbas gnas phebs*
Glr	*Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*
GoS	*Gazetteer of Sikhim*
GTKC	*Sems dpa' chen po phun tshogs rig 'dzin gyi dgung brten* [sic] *gyi dkar chag*
JPKB	*Rig 'dzin 'jigs med dpa' bo'i bka' 'bum/*
KZNG	*Kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba*
LSG	*La sogs rgyal rabs*
LTLY	*'Bras mo gshongs kyi lam yig*
LTNT	*Lha btsun chen po'i rnam thar gsol 'debs*
MTB	*Mon pa'i mtho byang*
NGR	*Mnga' bdag pa'i rgyal rabs*
NIT	Namgyal Institute of Tibetology edition of *The History of Sikkim*
PSLG	*Steng phyogs lha nas babs te nang mtshan rgya kar shar phyogs brgyud nas 'ong te khams mi nyag a'o ldong drug spun gsum gyi byung khungs lo rgyus bzhugs so*

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The Rnam rgyal dynasty.



Map of Sikkim and Her Neighbours.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Sikkim, although small compared to its neighbours, commands an important geographical position. Not only does Sikkim straddle a significant and ancient trade route between Tibet in the North and India to the South it also lies between the two historic forces of the sub-Himalaya: Nepal and Bhutan. This location along a Himalayan crossroads has been, historically, both a blessing and a curse for Sikkim and its people. Whilst Sikkim profited from trade with all of its neighbours its favourable location has also been a desirable prize for its stronger neighbours to both the east and the west. As a result of this the history of Sikkim is not a peaceful one. Instead it is characterised by, almost, continual warfare with either Nepal (following the establishment of the Gorkha kingdom) or Bhutan. As such the history of Sikkim, like most states, is intertwined with the histories of its neighbours. Events that play a prominent role in the histories of other states of the Tibetan and Himalayan region also are significant in the history of Sikkim. Many specialists of Tibet and the Himalaya know that Sikkim is considered as a *sbas yul*, a hidden land, theoretically and spiritually separated from the world at large. Yet contrary to the theoretical model of the *sbas yul* (as discussed below), interaction between Sikkim and the wider region was prevalent. Many specialists, for example, may be unaware of the extent of Sikkimese involvement in the Sino-Nepalese War 1788–1792 or the impact of the Dzungar invasion of Tibet on the religious and political history of Sikkim. Both these events were significant in the history of Tibet and it is Tibet that provides the backdrop for much of Sikkimese history and culture.

Sikkim is part of the 'Tibetan' region that falls outside the political and geographical boundaries of Tibet. Whilst the precise nature of the qualities that unites these, often very different, regions has been debated and contested by academics, Sikkim has to be understood within the wider Tibetan context. As illustrated above and discussed in more detail in the pages that follow, Sikkimese history cannot be divided from Tibetan history. Much that made Sikkim a state was conceived in Tibet, least of all the concept of the *sbas yul*. Yet more than the obvious religious and linguistic similarities, the political theories and

practices are distinctly 'Tibetan'. Whether it be the concept of divine kingship, the unified system of religion and politics, or the writing of legal and administrative documents, all have Tibetan antecedents, even if, like the religion of Sikkim, they have developed a 'Sikkimese' quality. Despite all these similarities Sikkim is not Tibet, and—as many Sikkimese people state—the Sikkimese are not Tibetans.

Today, Sikkim is an extremely diverse state in the Indian Union, home to numerous different Himalayan peoples with different cultures and religions. In part this situation is a testament to Sikkim's geo-political location as a meeting place for the different peoples of the Tibetan and Himalayan regions, yet it is also indicative of the colonial history of Sikkim and the socio-political engineering policies of the British Raj. In more recent years migration from Nepal has continued with people fleeing their homeland in search of more profitable lives or an escape from the recent civil war in Nepal. Whilst the current ethnic demographics of Sikkim remain complex, it is safe to say that Sikkim has always been a multi-ethnic region. From some of the earliest written documents of Sikkim references are made to three different and clearly identifiable ethnic groups: the Lho po or Tibeto-Sikkimese (of Tibetan origin), the Lepcha or Rong (who have resided in Sikkim since pre-historic times—for details see the section on early inhabitation of Sikkim later in this chapter), and the Limbu (a group which straddles the border regions of modern Sikkim and Nepal). This in part makes Sikkim distinct from Tibet. That is not to say that Tibet is some monolithic entity with a single 'Tibetan' ethnic group. It is just that the orientation and cultural legacies of the different ethnic groups of Sikkim is different from Tibet.

Sikkim is also different from Tibet in a number of other ways. In the first instance unlike the arid conditions of the Tibetan plateau, Sikkim is at a lower elevation than Tibet and receives more than its fair share of the annual South-Asian monsoons. This has made Sikkim extremely fertile, with an abundance of wild fruits and grains, profitable and large agricultural yields and dense jungle forests providing (in the past) large amounts of timber for construction and other purposes. The fertility of Sikkim has had an impact on the food culture of the region to such an extent that the old phrase for Tibetans as "Tsampa eaters", has little meaning for the Sikkimese who, even prior to the introduction of terraced rice cultivation by Nepali immigrants in the nineteenth century, were, according to the records available, prolific consumers of rice and wheat. Complementing the abundance

of agricultural produce, Sikkim also benefits from wild herbs, medicinal plants, and bamboo groves from which a variety of utensils are made. In part the geography and food culture of Sikkim is closer to that of Bhutan and Nepal than that of Tibet.

Bhutan and Nepal (following the establishment of the Gorkha kingdom) have had a huge impact on Sikkim, its people and history. Contacts between the people of, what are now, Bhutan and Nepal and Sikkim stretch back centuries. During the formative years of the state, Bhutanese Lamas and officials were present in the Sikkimese court and endowments were made to Lamas living in Sikkim by the local rulers of Nepal. In addition, with the westward expansion of Sikkim many Kiranti communities and political entities of eastern Nepal became tied to Sikkim through annual tribute. Yet the hold of the Sikkimese throne over its territory was tenuous at best, largely due to an aggressive and dominant aristocratic class. This weakness in the organisational structures of Sikkim has left Sikkim open to attack from Nepal and Bhutan, with both countries being successful on a number of occasions.

Unfortunately these events and wider aspects of Sikkimese history have not been adequately studied by historians of Tibet and the Himalaya, when compared with other areas of the Tibetan region. This has been due to a number of problems, including lack of access to historical sources, logistical problems such as obtaining visas and permits to conduct research in Sikkim and technical problems such as inadequate language training. As such, with the notable exclusion of Schuh and Dargyab (1978), the study of Sikkim and its history has always come second place to the study of wider Tibetan or Himalayan historical themes, such as British involvement in Tibet (Lamb 1986 and McKay 1997) or studies of Bhutanese or Nepalese history. A few articles have been published on elements of Sikkimese history (Rose 1990, Rock 1953) but even these have been based, not on original Sikkimese sources written in Tibetan, but on English translations of *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (*BGR*). Fortunately things are beginning to change. Besides this book, a number of articles have been written on Sikkimese history based on indigenous Tibetan sources, a revised edition of Kazi Dawa Samdup's translation of *BGR* is currently being completed by John Ardussi and Per Sørensen, and with Alex McKay's recent contributions on the British period in Sikkim (McKay 2004 and in press) these works all add to our knowledge of Sikkimese history. In addition to the recent works mentioned above it is hoped that this book will also offer a significant contribution to our understanding of Sikkimese history.

This book, however, is not intended to re-write Sikkimese history. Such an ambitious project can only be undertaken once we have an understanding of Sikkimese historiography. For this reason, amongst others that will become apparent in the following chapters, this book is centred on the theme of identifying significant historical sources and comparing them with later Sikkimese historiography. Therefore, the prime focus for this work is to address the apparent contradictions found within Sikkimese historiography, regarding the formation of the Sikkimese state; through the careful study and analysis of contemporary primary sources. Indeed in numerous histories of Sikkim written more recently there is a marked contrast in the interpretation of early Sikkimese statehood with sources actually written during the period in which the Sikkimese state appeared. The debate surrounds the precise date and events of the coronation of the first Sikkimese king or Chos rgyal: Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. In later works, such as *BGR*, the enthronement of the first Sikkimese king is portrayed as the defining moment of Sikkim's construction and being the result of the fruition of the prophetical tradition surrounding the *sbas yul* and the blessings and wisdom of Guru Rinpoche.[1] The principal element is the prophecy of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi* (the four yogis who are brothers) as contained in the *gter ma* works revealed by Ratna gling pa.

This follows the pattern of identifying each prophesied yogi with one of the four gates or doors to the hidden land located in the northern, southern, eastern and western directions and the belief that these four individuals would meet in the centre of the hidden land and organise the administration of the sacred geography in accordance with the religio-political order: *chos srid lugs gnyis*. By so doing they would be acting to confirm the wishes and intentions of Guru Rinpoche by maintaining the region as an idyllic site for the preservation of Buddhism during the degenerate times. Whilst the traditions of the *sbas yul* and its associated literature are full of quotes to that effect, the actual events, as recorded in seventeenth century Sikkimese works seem to propose a more complicated chronology.

Throughout this book a number of events, actors and themes will be introduced, which relate to the establishment of state structures, in the form of Buddhist and 'secular' institutions. These include the development of State infrastructure; the introduction of social and politi-

[1] For details of this story see *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (hereafter *BGR*): 37–42.

cal stratification, tax collection and an agricultural economy based of Tibetan principles of land tenure. These systems were subsumed under an established and recognised royal lineage, which did not appear as the result of the arrival of Tibetan lamas as proposed in historical narratives such a *BGR*, but through conflict and alliance. Indeed during the early years of the Sikkimese royal dynasty, there were a number of competing assertions of power by both Limbu (Sikkimese: *Gtsong*) and Lepcha (Sikkimese: *Mon*) groups.[2]

The reasons for the production of such a 'history' of Sikkim, will be one of the main foci of this book, yet at this time, given the infancy of studies of Sikkimese history and problems with the identification of source material, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive revision of seventeenth century events. However, I shall present a number of key possibilities which may lead, in the future, to a closer examination of this important period in Sikkimese history. Through the assessment of contemporary sources I will present two major issues, which may have contributed to the development of an orthodox historiography of Sikkim, and shall also highlight a number of events, not found in later Sikkimese works, which lead to the possible assumption that later Sikkimese historiography was manufactured on the basis of serious political and religious concerns.

1. Early Inhabitation of Sikkim and the Lepcha Migrations

Before moving on to other issues relevant to the argument in this book, it may prove useful to give an overview of early human inhabitation in Sikkim and the migrations of the Lepcha in particular. Over the past forty years a number of interesting archaeological discoveries have been made in Sikkim. The first publication of archaeological finds was in 1969, when Sikkim was still an independent country, by two Indian archaeologists N.R. Banerjee and J.L. Sharma. In that article published in the journal *Ancient Nepal* only one specimen was from Sikkim, a slate chisel, with the remainder of the finds from Nepal.

[2] This refers to the signing of the document, known locally as the *Lho Mon tshong gsum agreement*. This document is a legal charter, dated 1663, in which all members of the three communities of Sikkim swear to uphold the law and accept the single government of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal (see chapter six pages 140–146).

The Sikkimese chisel was found in Odhare, near modern Rumtek, which is more famously known as the exiled seat of the Karmapa. The chisel was dated by Banerjee and Sharma to the period 1000–200BC. The date range given by those two scholars appears to be ridiculously recent, particularly when they identified similarities between these tools and those found in Assam and the Brahmaputra basin, which are considered to typically represent the Indian Eastern Neolithic cultural assemblage, which in more recent years has been dated more realistically as being around 10,000–5,000BC.

Since the late 1960s, more numerous finds have been made in Sikkim. Neolithic tools have been found from the following places in Sikkim: Barpak, Gnon, Gor-terang Gytong, Lingden, Linkyong, Lingdon, Manshitong, Sangdong, Sankalong, Terang in North Sikkim and Shamshing, Pakhyong[3] in East Sikkim. In 2004 a team of Indian archaeologists led by P.K. Mishra, visited Sikkim where he and his team excavated 29 Neolithic sites and found over 100 stone tools. His findings were later published in 2008 under the title *Archaeological explorations in Sikkim*. In that book he noted two important points. The first was that his findings noted a distinct technological development in the production of tools, from chipped tools to polished and ground tools such as the polished stone axe; a characteristic tool of the Neolithic period. The second key point was one of comparison.

He argued that the finds in Sikkim point to two possible points of origin for the North Sikkim Neolithic cultural assemblage. He noted that the earlier chipped tools shared characteristics with similar finds in South-East Asia, in particular the Hòabìnhian culture, and dates these tools to around 10,000–8,000BC. According to Mishra the later polished and ground tools which are dated between 8,000–4,000BC, shared similarities to the Sìchuān and South China cultural assemblage. These findings seem to verify, in part, the earlier speculations on the migration of ancient Tibeto-Burmans, presented initially in an interesting article by George van Driem in 1998 and later in 2006.

In those articles, van Driem combined his extensive knowledge of the linguistic history of the Tibeto-Burman language family, with archaeological finds in Sìchuān, Gānsù, Eastern Tibet, Sikkim, Assam

[3] Place names here are rendered according to the standardised spellings found on maps of Sikkim.

and South-East Asia in order to propose a theoretical model of the migration patterns of ancient Tibeto-Burmans.[4]

Van Driem locates the Tibeto-Burman heart-land in the region of modern Yunnan and Sìchuān provinces, which he terms the centre of gravity for Tibeto-Burman languages. He goes on to state that this heartland roughly corresponds to the Sìchuān Mesolithic and Neolithic cultural assemblages, which dates to c.11,500–2,000BC. He states that according to linguistic evidence the first division of the Tibeto-Burman language family was into what he terms as Eastern and Western Tibeto-Burman. However, based on van Driem's various subsequent writings on Tibeto-Burman linguistic phylogeny, it is obvious that he intends what he once called "Western Tibeto-Burman" to be a collection of subgroups encompassing Brahmaputran and probably a number of other Tibeto-Burman groups in the Northeast of the Subcontinent. Through comparison of Mesolithic finds in both Sìchuān and the Brahmaputra valley, and some northern sites in Burma and South-East Asia, he argues, based on the work of a number of archaeologists (Dani 1960: 76, Chêng 1959, Chang 1965 and Wheeler 1959), that the similarity of the technology and materials used to craft tools have been found in sites from those regions, suggesting a cultural affinity between early Mesolithic to early Neolithic Sìchuān material culture and the South-East Asian and Indian Eastern Neolithic cultural assemblage. In particular he focuses on the appearance of the shouldered celt and faceted ground axe in Indian Eastern Neolithic culture and the use of Jadeite in the production of tools: a material not found in South-East Asia or the Brahmaputra valley. Van Driem argues that this suggests a strong connection to the Sìchuān Neolithic culture from which this technology originates. He concludes that the Western Tibeto-Burmans migrated to the Brahmaputra basin and from there expanded to parts of South-East Asia and the Assamese hills. This seems to suggest that whilst the first inhabitants of Sikkim may have migrated from the Brahmaputra basin, their own ancestors migrated to the Brahmaputra basin from Sìchuān.

[4] Driem has argued, as far back as 1997, that the Sino-Tibetan language family model needed to be discarded on the basis of evidence which shows that Sinetic languages emerged from the Tibeto-Burman family and not vice versa. This argument is contested by some linguists in the field of Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman linguistics.

Meanwhile the Eastern Tibeto-Burmans migrated northwards to Gānsù region. Van Driem argues that the north China civilisations of Péilígăng and Gānsù originated from Sìchuān. He argues this by stating that the other predominant cultures of China in the Mesolithic period seem unlikely candidates as the forerunner of these northern cultures as these cultures in northern China were characterised by polished stone and cord-marked pottery, which have not been found nor associated with Mesolithic hunter-gatherer communities in the other cultural regions associated with China such as Manchuria, Mongolia, and Chinese Turkestan. Van Driem argues that it is from the Péilígăng and Gānsù regions that the Sino-Bodic languages emerge.

The Yăngsháo Neolithic culture (5500–2700BC) succeeded the Péilígăng culture on the North China plain and the Măjiāyáo Neolithic (3900–1700BC) succeeded in Eastern Gānsù and parts of Qīnghăi. The Yăngsháo and Măjiāyáo cultures were more advanced than their predecessors but were still an extension of the previous cultures rather than a new migration from a different cultural zone or a new distinct culture. In turn from these two cultures, van Driem argues, there were further migrations, caused in all likelihood by the climatic change that occurred during the middle Neolithic period. This climatic change may have led to the scarcity of food and resources which in turn served as a push factor in the migration of the Yăngsháo and Măjiāyáo cultures.

The Măjiāyáo culture migrated both west from Gānsù along the inner-Asian trade routes and across the Himalaya to establish the later but genetically related Northern Neolithic culture in Kashmir and Swat around 2700–1700BC, and South through Eastern and South Eastern Tibet, and then on to Bhutan and Sikkim (c. 5000–3000BC). With the western thrust of the Măjiāyáo culture moving from Kashmir along the Himalayan alpine tract accounting for the proliferation of Tibeto-Burman languages in the Nepali hill regions. But, van Driem goes on, these languages are distinct from the languages of the Southern thrust of the Măjiāyáo culture, pointing to Lepcha in particular, which on account of its indeterminate position in Tibeto-Burman family with both affinities with both Bodic and Old Chinese seems to suggest a much earlier migration pattern than that of the subsequent thrust from Kashmir across the Himalayan belt.

Van Driem provides the estimate that the ancestors of the Lepchas may have crossed the Himalaya in the third or fourth Millennia BC, corresponding roughly to the end of the later Neolithic finds dated 8,000–4,000BC by Mishra in his recent book. Whether this suggests

that the proto-Lepchas dominated the people of the North Sikkim Cultural Assemblage, or whether they incorporated them into their culture is almost impossible to determine. Similarly it is not altogether clear whether the proto-Lepcha themselves originated from the Sìchuān or Mǎjiāyáo Cultural Assemblages though the indication is, as far as van Driem has stated, that the proto-Lepcha form part of the early Southerly movement from the Mǎjiāyáo cultural assemblage. If that is indeed the case it seems to suggest that the Tibeto-Sikkimese and the Lepcha share an ancient and distant ancestry as the origins of the people speaking central Bodish languages such as Lho skad (Sikkimese) are also to be found in the southerly migrations from Mǎjiāyáo.

From this evidence it seems clear that Sikkim has been inhabited since pre-historic times, and that the Lepchas too have resided in the Sikkimese hills from at least c. 5000BC. However, the dominant formative narrative of Sikkim is grounded in developments that took place in historical times. This narrative of Sikkim is not only grounded in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition but specifically within the theoretical framework of the *gter ma* and hidden land traditions, and it is these traditions that I will now turn to.

2. Gter ma and the Identification of Sikkim

The importance of the *gter ma* tradition in Sikkim and its history cannot be understated. It was ultimately the *gter ma* tradition, in particular the 'discoveries' of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can (1337–1408)[5] that gave Sikkim its name: 'Bras mo ljongs. Prior to Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can Sikkim was indistinguishable from the rest of the southern Himalaya, being defined by the toponyms *lho yul, lho mon, mon yul* etc. Yet more important than the identification of Sikkim, was the creation of Sikkim as a *sbas yul*, a hidden land blessed, according to Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can, by Guru Rinpoche who came to Sikkim and set it apart from the mundane world as a worldly paradise for the practice of Buddhism when the religion came under threat elsewhere. The idea of the *sbas yul* has been the subject of numerous writings (Diemberger 1996, Sadar-Afkhami 2001, Lhundup 2001, Rigzin Ngodup 1998 and 2000 etc.) and it is worth discussing some of these points briefly.

[5] See Nyi ma Bzang po's biography of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can for details of the life and discoveries of this lama.

The idea of the *sbas yul*, which appears as a uniquely Tibetan phenomenon actually, according to Sadar-Afkhami (2001: 6), has its origins in Indian tantric literature and the identification of holy or sacred sites which act as gateways between the ordinary realm and the pure realm. He goes on to state that the idea of the *sbas yul* combines the popular wish for earthly paradises with the tradition of tantric pilgrimage. And from the Tibetan perspective the *sbas yul* is "neither entirely psychological nor geographical, but a dimension that can only manifest between the two, when mind and landscape become transparent to each other in non-dual space" (Sadar-Afkhami 2001: 7).

Whilst this is true, the *sbas yul* from the outset also had a religio-political function as a place to escape to in times of persecution (Diemberger 1997 and Childs 1999). Indeed Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can's own travels in the Himalaya were not entirely motivated by religious concerns. He was born into a time of extreme political uncertainty with the Yuan-Sa skya rule of central Tibet drawing to a close and his search for patronage amongst the Gung thang royalty was initially hindered by followers of the New Translation schools (*gsar ma*), namely the Sa skya. Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can thus lost his only patrons and was forced to go in search for the Hidden lands.[6] Indeed, as Sadar-Afkhami notes (2001: 75), he was pursued by some hostile official.[7] In actuality then, whilst the theory of the *sbas yul* may be grounded in tantric literature it is also grounded in the real need for places of refuge (Childs 1999: 136–137). In this book both these elements will be identified. However, in order to understand the importance of both these issues it is important to discuss the importance of textual authority and authenticity in the *gter ma* tradition generally and the impact of this on the idea of Sikkim as a *sbas yul*.

Indeed in Sikkim a great deal of importance is placed on the authority of *gter ma* literature as an accurate representation of reality, in particular: the authority and authenticity of prophetical literature.[8] This

[6] For further details of the role of the royal family of Mang yul Gung thang in supporting Rnying ma lamas see Everding 2004.

[7] *Nye gnas chen po chos dpal bas dmag bskul/ zhag po dmag 'chad dang cad pa cig gis bzlogs tshad pa bar chad kyi rnams par byung/* (Sadar-Afkhami 2001: 75 fn 82). Here he quotes from *Byang gter lugs kyi rnam thar dang ma 'ongs lung bstan* Gangtok 1983: 93.3.

[8] Whilst in Sikkim the importance and authenticity of the *gter ma* is undoubted, it is important to remember that this has not always been the case in Tibet. Kapstein (2000: 121–137) noted that amongst Tibetan religious-scholars the authenticity of *gter*

form of literature often accompanies the actual *gter ma* ritual cycles or practices that are revealed. For example Lha btsun chen po's *gter ma* cycle *Rig 'dzin srog grub* contains within it a number of prophecies regarding Sikkim. The authority and authenticity of these writings (both prophecies and *gter ma* cycles) result from two things. First, the idea common to most *gter ma* is that they were hidden during the time of Guru Rinpoche,[9] either as physical objects (*sa gter*), as mental seeds placed in the mental continuum of a disciple to bear fruit at the appropriate time (*dgongs gter*), or through direct interaction with the divine through visions (*dag snang gter*). The second idea regarding the authenticity of individual *gter ma* results from the content of the *gter ma* and the character of the *gter ston*; namely, whether it corresponds to Buddhist philosophy and if so, whether the *gter ston* has the necessary spiritual attainments (Gyatso 1993 and 1986). The authenticity or legitimacy of the *gter ma* tradition results from the power of the original person who concealed the treasure (Gyatso 1993: 109); whereas individual *gter ma* gain their authority from, not only the power of the initial concealers but also in the acknowledgement that the *gter ma* identifies relevant teachings which correspond with Buddhist philosophy. The ramifications of this process on Sikkim and its history are very important, as anything that has been articulated through the *gter ma* tradition receives wider acceptance as being an authentic *gter ma* and it is through this process that Sikkim is identified as a *sbas yul*.[10] This wider process, however, also becomes increasingly problematic when the text in question is a prophecy regarding an element in history, as the resulting implication is that the prophecy becomes accepted as historical fact over and above sources from

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ma has been contested and debated. Another important contribution to the debate on the authenticity of *gter ma* is Aris 1988.

[9] It should be noted that *gter ma* was not the exclusive domain of Guru Rinpoche, as other texts are considered to have been concealed by the emperors of Tibet or other significant figures.

[10] It should be noted at this point that when Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can actually returned from Sikkim, proclaiming it as a *sbas yul* it was not universally accepted. Indeed in the Fifth Dalai Lama's work on the history of the Byang gter (see *The collected works* Nya volume and the bibliography of this book) he notes that conflict arose between the disciples of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can and the disciples of Sangs rgyas gling pa (also an important *gter ston* and contemporary of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can). This is likely to be a euphemism attempted to pass the blame of this controversy onto the disciples of both of those masters rather than admit that the masters themselves were engaged in the controversy.

the actual period the prophecy is said to be about. This problem is encountered often in Sikkimese historical narratives, as I shall show in chapter one.

Whilst there are problems prevalent in the transformation of prophetic and religious literature into the Sikkimese historical tradition, the nature of history as a form of enquiry has also been debated in wider academic circles. In a book such as this one, which attempts to understand the contradiction between historical sources on the one hand and indigenous religio-historical belief on the other, it becomes necessary to contextualise the argument in this book within the wider academic discourse on the nature and value of history as an academic discipline.

3. History, Narrative and Myth

This book makes use of the term 'historical narrative' to define and describe the way in which the past is portrayed in Sikkim. In essence it is a description of the historiography of Sikkim. I distinguish this from history, by which I mean the academic discipline and not just 'the past', which in popular parlance has become synonymous. This leaves one obvious but incredibly difficult question about what history actually is. There are a number of significant works that have led the way in academic understandings of history; these include the seminal works of R.G. Collingwood in *The Idea of History*, Carr and his work *What is History?* And more recently the work of writers such as Tosh (2002).

History is, according to Collingwood, an inquiry into the past. It is generically a science in as far as one can define science as "the forms of thought whereby we ask questions and try to answer them" and in this way history is a science (1993[1946]: 9). So if history is a science in the generic form, there must also be an object for that inquiry. The object of history is thus human beings and their actions in the past (1993: 10). Collingwood goes on to state that history relies on the interpretation of evidence which he defines as a thing that exists in the present which a historian can think about and which helps him to answer the questions he asks about the past. Normally this evidence originates from the period of study but it can also originate from other periods and form secondary source material, which Tosh defines as "anything that [an historian's] predecessors have written about the past" (2002: 57).

The purpose of history is slightly vague,[11] but ultimately it is human self-knowledge; history tells us in the present what humankind has done and so helps us understand what and who we are. It helps us answer the fundamental philosophical question that has perennially preoccupied human thought since the dawn of man, and, for that matter, woman: Who are we?

But history has not always been thought of according to Collingwood, Tosh or Carr's criteria. History has not always been the scientific examination of evidence, based on questions regarding the past and humanity, but has been understood in a multitude of ways. For example, quasi-historical narrative traditions can be found throughout the world. The Norse sagas mixed semi-historical figures with fantasy and legend, other literary traditions produced 'histories' not of humanity but of divine figures where events are attributed to the actions of the divine. The same is true of Greco-Roman epics of hagiography, which concern themselves with the study of divine action and the relationship between man and gods and not humanity itself; and similar things could be said about Tibetan religious biography and historiography, where supernatural inspiration/action is commonplace.

In recent years history has come under attack by post-structural thinkers. In this book some of the ideas formed by these post-structuralists have been interpreted in part as they can contribute useful criticism of the historical method, particularly regarding the method employed in Sikkimese historiography and historical narratives. However, their ultimate aim, through deconstruction, is to reduce knowledge to subjective ideological pursuits imbued with power; or, put simply, to demonstrate the uselessness of history.

Hayden White has been one of the most prominent critics of history and historical methodology. In his work *Metahistory: the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973) he sets out his key themes in the construction of history. History, he argues, is constructed by historians on the basis of their own preferences. These preferences take the form of ideology (the theoretical or political perspective of the individual historian i.e. radical, anarchist, conservative, liberal etc.), argument or explanation (the model for understanding

[11] The purpose of history may be to gain understanding of our past for its own sake, to bring knowledge to the present through an understanding of the past, to simply explain or recreate the past (Tosh 2002: 54).

how 'historical units' relate to each other) and emplotment (literary genre). White argues that history can only be written using a variety of different forms of ideology, emplotment and argument/explanation and that there is no other scientific way of writing history outside of these forms and so historians have to make a choice about the mode, style and genre in which they write history and the theory or model they use to analyse historical material. On that basis, as all history is defined by an ideology or theory (including the theory of non-theory) all history is metahistory. By this he means that all historians, despite their differing preferences, "state or imply a general view on the nature of history" (Hilliard 1997) and so create a body of theory on what history is, which in turn becomes the received wisdom but is ultimately not grounded in truth but in ideology and belief. Ultimately Collingwood's ideas on history (which are generally accepted by historians as a reasonable definition of history and its method) are, according to postmodernists, a subjective belief.

White's approach is a major challenge to the discipline of history, as the ultimate extension of his argument is that if history is subjective and belief-based, how is it possible to objectively *know* the past (Jenkins 1991). A significant problem with the postmodern approach to history is its implicit assumption that "traditional" historians have not been engaged in similar questions. Ultimately, historians do rely on facts and evidence which they interpret, and by definition interpretation is not a definitive truth; yet historians debate the relevance of certain forms of interpretation, because we accept that ultimately the past in its entirety is unknowable (in the sense of some high definitive truth). History is not about knowing the past, but attempting to understand it and this difference, often lost on post-modernists, is an important one. As historians we attempt to understand history through the interpretation of events and facts, trying to give meaning to these events and facts as a way of attempting to understand humanity in an historical period. For this reason written history is debated and contested, as if we could truly know the past, historical writings would be universally accepted, which of course they are not.[12] Ulti-

[12] A look at the history section of your local library or bookshop will illustrate this fact by the sheer number of books written about the same time period. For example a bookshop in the west of England, which deals specifically with books on the Second World War, has a listing of over 20,000 titles on its website: www.worldwartwobooks.com.

mately, then, the post-modern criticism of history is often based on a misunderstanding of what history is and what, as historians, we are attempting to do. This has been pointed out by Mary Fulbrook (2000) in her critique of post-structural comparisons between literature and history. Arthur Marwick (2001) has also been vocal in his opposition to post-modern critiques on the irrelevance of history by arguing that the past, or knowledge of the past, ultimately effects the present and future. Related to this, I highlight in the conclusion of this book that history is often (mis)used for political ends by political groups, and that the academic pursuit of history can serve as a check on politically motivated historical constructions for the justification of certain (often oppressive) political practices.[13] Whilst such criticisms are fundamental to historical theory, it is also important for historians to recognise the importance of some post-modern ideas relating to history; in particular discussions of narrative in historical writing.

It is in this area that Hayden White has made an important contribution to the understanding of historiography. In his article "The value of narrativity in the representation of reality", he makes an important distinction between narration, i.e. the reporting of events and reality, and narrativity, which is the imposition of the form of a story on those events and on reality itself (1980: 6). White notes that in historical narratives the events are represented as 'speaking for themselves'; this, he says, is problematic because real events "should not speak, should not tell themselves. Real events should simply be". The problem with narrativisation of real events, according to White, is that real events do not offer themselves as stories, they just are (1980: 8–9). He ultimately argues that the value attached to narrativity in historiography is problematic because it attempts to give closure to reality, to tell a story of reality, when in actuality, reality and the world does not present itself in the form of a narrative with a beginning, middle and end. This idea is important for Sikkimese historiography, where there is a presentation of a story revolving around three principal points: prophecy (beginning), event or the interpretation of events based on prophecy (middle), and the fulfilment of prophecy (end). In this book

[13] An obvious example is the attempt by extreme right wing political parties in Europe to unwrite the Holocaust from the history of the Nazis and the Second World War. Many post-modernists who attempt to 'liberate' history from the 'subjective' representations of historians might, unwittingly, give much needed philosophical ammunition to the Holocaust deniers of the far-right.

I shall attempt to avoid constructing my own historical narratives and to merely present facts as they appear in the sources I have used.[14] However, for a historian it is difficult to reject narrative as a mode of articulating and explaining the past, because ultimately our goal is to attempt to give meaning to the past, something which ultimately contradicts with the postmodern approach to history. For this reason it is important to make a distinction between the local historical narratives of Sikkim and wider historical methodology and to accept in part Hayden White's discussion of the representation of reality as narrative but also admit that narrative plays a fundamental role in articulating the past. Whether this role devalues the 'objectivity' of history, as postmodernist may argue, or not, the reader must ultimately decide.

Throughout this book I use the terms 'Sikkimese historical narratives' or 'local historical narratives' to make a distinction between narrative style and historical method. In part it is an admission that narrative can obstruct historical fact, but it is also often inescapable. I use the term 'narrative' in this book not as a means of describing the style of Sikkimese historical writing, though most examples do use narrative in that way, but to describe the method of Sikkimese historical writing as distinct from academic modes of writing history. By this I mean the reliance of Sikkimese writers on a pre-established story surrounding state formation in Sikkim, which they then use to articulate the events they wish to portray. This story is based on the three principal events mentioned above: prophecy, event, and fulfilment of prophecy. Because the majority of Sikkimese histories follow this pattern I have designated them as narratives; this is particularly relevant given that the importance of the three principal points of the narrative often take precedence over the facts, something that will become apparent throughout the pages of this book. In order to understand why this is the case it is important to contextualise the mode in which Sikkimese history is formed.

A critical point in the contextualisation of Sikkimese historical narratives is the distinction made between the methods of the history of the academy and the history of Sikkimese writers. Whereas academic history is constructed through analysis of primary and secondary evi-

[14] It is for this reason amongst others that I shall attempt to reproduce most of the sources I have used with direct translations, to avoid the curse of narrativising events in a way divorced from the events and reality itself.

dence and the interpretation of that evidence according to theory and an attempt at trying to understand the human condition at a given time (i.e. what motivates people, what are people's needs or aspirations, their fears or hopes etc.), local Sikkimese history is grounded in a different methodology, which places oral accounts on par with documentary evidence. Tibetan historiography is not necessarily based on the scientific examination of material, but revolves around a different form of inquiry. One form of evidence is attributed to the accounts of living people who, Tibetan historical writers believe, have received their accounts from previous generations, creating a perfect uninterrupted oral lineage of history, in the same way as oral religious lineages are formed and maintained. A second form of evidence is physical evidence: places which can be identified with historical events and which are seen as unchanging in nature, caught in a time capsule and preserving historical events in the foundations of buildings etc. A third and final form of evidence is religious inspiration enforced by scriptural authority (see chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion).

Historical method in the academy is based on a completely different world-view, where evidence from the period in question ranks higher than oral, religious and sometimes physical evidence. The reason for this is that the further away one gets from the period in question the greater the chance that the material will become intentionally or unintentionally adulterated. This is due to the fact that historians recognise that knowledge of the past is a living entity, subject to change and reinterpretation by people and society according to the needs of a society at any given point in time. As such there is always the possibility that material written, narrated or constructed after the period in question, may cast the events of the past in light of present (in terms of when the history was written) circumstances. Oral history can be a good example of this process, as people forget, change things, add new stories or expand existing stories depending on social needs or wider changes in society (see Tonkin 1995: 4).[15] Physical evidence (in the form of buildings etc.) is also problematic, especially in the Tibetan world

[15] Charles Ramble has discussed this at some length in an article where he compares and contrasts the oral tradition of the founding of Lubra Village with written sources (1983). I have also personally witnessed this in the interviews I have conducted about clan and origins histories, whereby the person recounting the narrative might pause and say that s/he has forgotten that part of the story, or someone might interrupt and say that what the teller has said is wrong and that something happened in a different way.

where acts such as the refurbishment of monasteries have a religious function by providing a way in which merit can be accumulated. Furthermore, over time buildings fall down, are destroyed by fire or war, or are extended and rebuilt.[16] Because of these possibilities in method it becomes difficult to read Sikkimese historical narratives as history in the academic sense. This becomes increasingly problematic when mythical elements appear as historical facts, such as the (unaided) flight of lamas and other miraculous deeds. Such things make historians uncomfortable, as being grounded in scientific methodology they would instantly disregard such statements on the basis that it is generally believed that it is scientifically impossible for a human to fly unaided. What this example underlines is the fundamental difference in the method of academic historical writing and the method of Sikkimese or Tibetan historiography. However, mythical storytelling also has a social function, and it is imperative for historians to understand the importance of this as a means of understanding the mind-set of the people and society they study.

Lincoln (1989) has added an interesting dimension to the definition of myth. He argues that myth, as the term is commonly used, is more subtle than a story which is untrue, but actually designates a relationship of superiority between the speaker (who identifies a story as myth and so untrue) and the people (or era), from whom the story originate, who believe the story to be true (1989: 24). This implies a system of power in operation between those who believe in the truth assertion of the myth and those who regard the story as untrue. Lincoln, as a way of negating the relationship of power and superiority/inferiority, argues that a suitable definition of myth, history, legend and fable (which all share similar narratives) should be formulated on the basis of whether the narrators attempt to assert some form of truth and whether that truth-assertion is accepted by their audience. In such a way he identifies a fable as a narrative that has no truth-assertion and so is accepted by the audience as fiction; a legend as a narrative that is presented as truth but is discredited by its audience;

[16] In Britain during the Victorian era, there was the widespread practice of trying to locate historical sites. One such example was the attempt to locate the room in the Tower of London where the two nephews of Richard III were kept after the 1483 Act of Parliament declared them illegitimate and thus excluded from the royal succession, and the exact location of the execution platform of Mary Queen of Scots etc. It was later discovered in the 1990s (during the refurbishment of the site) that the locations had been incorrectly identified.

history, which asserts truth and is accepted; and myth which has credibility and authority. What he means by authority is that myth has an element of social authority in that it acts as a charter or blueprint for society itself.[17] This is quite an interesting idea insofar as this relates to the construction of Sikkimese historical narratives and the role of these narratives in the construction of Sikkimese nationhood (see chapter seven for details). As the Sikkimese historical narrative, which can be proven by historical method to be inaccurate, is considered true by many Sikkimese people and that this truth assertion is directly related to issues of identity as a people. That is, the narrative tradition acts as a blueprint for Sikkimese society and its historical identity, by shaping the past into a model for national identity.

4. State, Nation and Nationalism

Whilst this book is undoubtedly about the nature of Sikkimese historical narratives and the problems faced when attempting to understand history from an academic perspective, it is also about the nature of state formation in Sikkim. As the above section helps ground this book in contemporary debates on historical thought as a backdrop to discussions on the nature of Sikkimese historical narratives, it is also important to have a similar grounding in academic thought on state formation and the construction of nations and nationalism, which should be considered as separate things. This is particularly important given that Sikkimese historical narratives attempt to define Sikkimese history as a national history; a topic that will be discussed at length in chapter seven.

Throughout this book I have used the term 'state' in a rather simple way; an organised political community, which is subsumed under a government. I include within this definition both states which are sovereign and states subject to external sovereignty, whereby supreme authority may reside (sometimes only theoretically) in another political entity, state or polity. Ultimately the state is a political entity which controls the population of an area, which may or may not be defined territorially, through a system of legitimate power or force, both of which can be exercised locally and through devolved elites within a

[17] Lincoln 1989: 25.

state. As such Weber's definition of a state, as an institution which claims the exclusive right to the legitimate use of force in a given territory, is in part valid. However, I also accept Gellner's addition that there are states which do not monopolise force, such as feudal states where private wars were waged between rival lords and that these wars were tolerated by the state, provided they did not threaten the stability of the state as a whole or feudal obligations to an overlord (Gellner 1983: 3). I also reject the distinction made by Weber between the state of his definition (that is the modern state) and what he terms the 'political institutions', which historically preceded the development of his modern state. As the historical reality is that the term 'the state' meant different things in different periods of history.

The key point of Weber's definition, which proves useful for the purposes of this book, is that the state must be seen as being legitimate. Legitimacy of a state to exercise power, control and authority is fundamental to the survival and existence of a state; yet it should be noted that, the legitimacy of the state was not understood in the same way modern, particularly democratic, states are legitimised. That is, the state is not necessarily considered legitimate by the entire population, but by dominant political elites or, as Hay and Lister have noted, by the power and stature of the ruler (2006: 7).

Hay and Lister discuss the development of the concept of the state starting with it Latin root *status*, i.e. social status, stature or standing. They go on to discuss how the standing or "stateliness" of rulers in medieval Europe was used to distinguish a ruler from his subjects. From that came the idea that the state resides in the body of the ruler and one is reminded of the famous illustration on the title page of Hobbes' *Leviathan*. But before Hobbes, it was Machiavelli who unified the idea of the monarch as the state with the extension of the monarch (and the state) to the 'character of the political regime, the geographic area over which sovereign authority was claimed and maintained and the very institutions of government required to preserve such authority' (Hay and Lister 2006: 7). The separation of the monarch and his embodiment of the state was developed by republican political theory and writers such as Dante and his concept of the state of civic liberty, whereby the state's legitimacy is seen not as being synonymous with a rulers' stature but as being determined by the people (cited in Hay and Lister 2006: 7). Thus a rulers' authority comes from the legitimacy of the state by the people and not the innate legitimacy of the ruler by means of his stature above the subjects of his embodied

state or his royal bloodline. It is the idea of the separation of the ruler from the state that frames modern understanding of what the state is and it is this that creates the greatest confusion when trying to understand political entities in the pre-modern period and in Tibet and the Himalaya. In essence then the legitimacy of a state is defined, in the pre-modern period, by elites and not by the population at large. In addition the term 'state' is often used interchangeably with nation, implying that a state must be of a modern form defined by territorial distinctions, something—if not lacking—was, at least confused and indeterminate in the Sikkimese context. As such, whilst Weber's definition mentioned above is a good starting point, it might also be useful to understand the Sikkimese state as a community living under an organisational structure where power and authority is defined in the form of a structured hierarchy even though that hierarchy, in different periods of Sikkimese history, oscillated between a 'real' structure or a theoretical one, depending upon the relative strength of the Chos rgyal, the aristocracy and the political significance of wider inter-regional events.

Another key term I use is 'state formation', by which I mean the way in which a state comes to be in existence. However, unlike nations, which are often constructed intentionally, states are not formed by the intention of a ruler to create a state but, as Charles Tilly has argued, are formed through "a process…driven largely by extraction, control and coalition formation as parts or by-products of rulers' efforts not to build states but to make war and survive" (2006: 419).

Another key theme in this book is the extent to which we can identify the Sikkimese state as a 'Tibetan' state. By this I mean what characteristics, if any, did the Sikkimese state share with other states in the Tibetan world, or was Sikkim a 'Tibetan' state simply because the dominant body were made up of Tibetan migrants.[18] In this book

[18] Throughout this book I have termed these Tibetan migrants in Sikkim as Tibeto-Sikkimese. This is mainly due to the problems of identifying suitable ethnonyms for this population of people said to be descended from Tibetans. Unfortunately in today's climate of ethnic politics many of the terms traditionally used to describe Sikkimese people of Tibetan origin (Lho po, 'Bras ljongs pa, Bhutia etc.) have been imbued with political meanings from which it is hard to escape. For example the term 'bras ljongs pa can only be applied due to the activities of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can and his designation of Sikkim as 'Bras mo ljongs and begs the question of what these people were called before this designation was applied. Bhutia is a derogatory term used by Nepalese to designate all northern beef-eating and alcohol-drinking Buddhists. The term 'Tibetan' is exclusively used to describe post 1959-refugees and is not suitable for

I discuss these ideas in relation to Sikkimese state formation and argue that Tibetan concepts of state and social organisation were fundamental to the organisation of the Sikkimese state. Indeed Goldstein's work (1971a) on the model of socio-political stratification in Tibet and his study of centralisation and decentralisation (1971b) and taxation in Tibetan villages (1971c) prove useful studies for understanding Sikkimese socio-political and economic organisation (see chapters three and six for details). In addition to the 'Tibetan' nature of the Sikkimese state another key theme in this book is the idea of Sikkim as a nation as distinct from the idea of the Sikkimese state.

Any discussion of the nation has to start with the formidable work of Ernest Gellner in his book *Nations and Nationalism* (1983). He argued that there was nothing primordial, natural or historical about the rise of nations and the associated concept of nationalism, and that nations were the product of modernisation. He argued that with modernisation and industrialisation, society was radically transformed. In agrarian societies there was no need to promote the homogenisation of culture, given that the primary focus of the state and elites was the collection of taxes and maintenance of the peace (1983: 10), something we find reflected in the history of Sikkim. Indeed literacy was only available to select elites, which he terms the clerisy. He notes that literacy, through the standardisation of script and language, has the possibility of creating "cultural and cognitive storage and centralisation" (1983: 8). He argues that with industrialisation the need to create homogeneous communication systems which could be understood irrespective of locality became apparent as the need to train people in the use of new technology appeared. It was through this process of homogenisation that the nation and nationalism were born.

Gellner's approach regarding the creation of nations and nationalism is similar to Hobsbawn and Ranger's discussion of the invention of tradition (see conclusion). These modernisation theorists have come under criticism from a number of authors, the most notable of who is Anthony Smith. Smith (1996 [1989]) differs from both the 'modernists' like Gellner and Benedict Anderson (who saw nationalism as the product of modernisation and industrialisation) and the 'primodialists'

Tibeto-Sikkimese on account of their long history in Sikkim. For these reasons I have chosen to coin a new term which indicates both the Tibetan origins of the people and the Sikkimeseness of the people.

(who contended that there is an ever-present essence of nation within an ethnicity ready to emerge under the right conditions). Smith argues that the notion of a nation does not lie within the ethnicity but within myths, memories, values and symbols. As "There can be no identity without memory (albeit selective), no collective purpose without myth and identity, and purpose or destiny are necessary elements of the concept of a nation." (Smith 1996: 105).

For Smith, before nations there were *ethnies*—that is, communities with a collective name, common myth of descent, shared history, culture and perhaps language and territory; these ethnies form the basis of modern nations. He, therefore, maintains that there is a continuation between pre-modern society and modern society. As far as Sikkim is concerned these discussions are somewhat problematic considering that Sikkim never fully emerged as a nation. However, these discussions are important for understanding the construction of historical narratives and the purposes for which they were written, which was undoubtedly to create the backdrop for the recognition of Sikkim as a Nation. As I shall show throughout this book, such preoccupations often led to the construction of a history divorced from the facts available in seventeenth century sources.

5. Legitimacy and Tibetan Religio-Political Theories of State and Governance

During the period of the formation of the Sikkimese state, legitimacy was an essential aspect in that process and as such a body of Tibetan political theory, as well as legitimising historical narratives of origin (see chapter two and three) developed. These narratives drew upon Tibetan ideas of the invitation of kings to rule, as discussed by Ramble (2006) in his article on the principles of Tibetan monarchy, Indic models of the *cakravātin* (the universal monarch) and the *dharmarāja* (Tib. *Chos rgyal*), and the extension of that idea into the religio-political theory of state and governance: *chos srid lugs gnyis*. It is these concepts that need to be understood when discussing the legitimacy of Tibetan (broadly defined) states and Sikkim in particular.

Returning to the definition of 'the state' in general and its applicability to the Tibetan context one needs to be aware of the political theories developed by the Tibetans on the one hand, with the reality of the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of Tibetan states on the other. The

defragmented nature of Tibetan states, and the ability of the Tibetan state (and by this I am referring to the post 1642 Dge lugs pa state) to exercise control over its constituent parts has been the subject of much debate over the past forty years beginning with Cassinelli and Ekvall's work on Sa skya in 1969 and Goldstein's critique of that study in 1971b. A decade later Geoffrey Samuel entered the fray, in 1982, with his discussion of Tibet as a stateless society, before developing his argument along the lines of Stanley Tambiah's (1976: 119–123) galactic polity model (Samuel 1993: 61–62). At the time of writing, the argument on statelessness in Tibet has been furthered by another Southeast Asian import: that of James Scott's zomia concept of 'non-state space', the applicability of which to the Himalaya has been discussed by Sara Shneiderman (2010). The ideas put forward by James Scott have some usefulness for understanding geographical impediments to state formation (Scott 2009: 40–50) and communities in Tibet that fell outside the 'territory' of Tibetan states and for communities with little state interaction such as nomadic communities where different forms of social and political organisation can be found. However, his thesis which is defined by the dichotomy of valleys or flat geographic terrain as sites for states versus mountainous or hilly geography as areas of non-state spaces does not work for Sikkim or, for that matter, where the geography is dominated by such mountainous terrain which, Scott would associate with non-state spaces. In a book (like this one) which is primarily about the formation of a state, James Scott's work does not really contribute to our understanding of what a Tibetan state is, and the systems of political organisation found within Central Tibet or Sikkim; though it may help in understanding the regions of fluidity that formed the 'borders' of Sikkim in the seventeenth century as discussed in chapter six. Samuel's application of the galactic polity model is perhaps more relevant to understanding, not only, the interaction between Tibetan polities in a given historical period, but also the power shift from one political centre to another over time. Yet perhaps now is the time to shift our understanding and definition of 'the state' in the Tibetan context from traditional definitions towards a model that incorporates Tibetan principles of state, governance and society.

One key religio-political theory is that of *chos srid lugs gnyis*. This theory is centred on the idea that governance should include not just the secular world but also the spiritual. Unlike modern western societies where the separation of the spiritual orders and the political realm

is the ideal, in Tibetan societies the unification of these two systems is considered the perfect mode of government, whereby the religious influences and shapes the political and the political (through sponsorship, for example) influences the religious. In this way a political figure or government is obliged to actively preserve and promote Buddhism; this is noted through the use of the term *mchod yon*, the traditional association between a "religious preceptor-officiant" (*mchod gnas*) and a secular ruler; *yon bdag* (Ruegg 2004: 9) or *dharmarāja*. Ruegg and other scholars have written at some length on this issue (Ruegg 1995 and 1991, Cüppers, 2004, Ehrhard 2004 etc.) and I refer readers to those writings. What is interesting for this book is the application of this terminology to the Sikkimese situation. The use of these terms (*mchod yon, lugs gnyis* etc.) indicates an interesting event in Sikkimese politics and one that warrants some explanation. As implied by the work of Ruegg, *mchod yon* is the role of, and relation between, the *yon bdag* (royal patron / lay donor) and the *mchod gnas* (Lama or religious donee); which he notes as being primarily religious and personal, rather than an official or institutionalized concept (Ruegg 1997: 857).

While, *mchod yon* does indeed convey this form of personal religious relationship, it would be a mistake to think that it cannot also be understood, in certain contexts, as also a religio-political concept, which can develop into an institutionalized form; as *mchod yon* also implicates the two realms of the religious order (as represented by the recipients of donation—*mchod gnas*) and the temporal order which is the domain of political power and the lay community, who act as sponsors.[19] It is from this relationship between the temporal and spiritual spheres of social life, represented as a relationship of patronage, that we can understand the formation and extraction of a unified religio-political concept such as *lugs gnyis*. Thus, in a somewhat simplified way, *lugs gnyis* represents the political institutionalization of the *mchod yon* concept of religious patronage.

Lugs gnyis is probably best understood as a religio-political theory of state and society, in which the united territories of the political and religious worlds play a complementary, although not always equal, role in the formation and direction of policy. Thus certain guarantees

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[19] It is worth noting that "sponsorship" of religious establishments was often compulsory. Those *mi ser* attached to the monastic estates in Sikkim are referred to as *sbyin bdag*, despite the fact that their 'contributions' to those monasteries was guaranteed through their physical bond to the land they 'leased' from the monastery.

and concessions are set in place, theoretically, to maintain the balance and stability of both social orders; and this includes the promotion of Buddhist traditions, donation of money for the construction of religious sites and rituals. The actual practical application of this system in Tibet, however, has been characterized by the alternation of political power between more secular groups and religious groups of Tibetan political society; leading to vulnerable and highly unstable governments, susceptible to political intrigue and rebellion rather than the desired result of political and religious stability. This is particularly the case when different religious groups vie for influence and sponsorship from prominent and powerful secular leaders. During the seventeenth century, central Tibet was characterised by this practice of obtaining political support in order to maintain political influence, and this certainly had an impact on the formation of the Sikkimese state. However, whilst this system was susceptible to political manipulation by some religious figures, it has to be understood that this was not a universal practice. Often religious figures did not agree with the political ambitions of their sponsors and there certainly were sponsors without political ambitions, who generally believed in the system of *lugs gnyis* and genuinely wished to promote Buddhism. Often it is easy to see only the political implications of this theory (especially when viewed from contemporary times where religious belief is on the decline), and forget that in the past people were also motivated by religious belief as well as political ambition.

With that caveat in mind, I want to turn towards the concept of the ideal ruler, to rule over this dual religio-political system. Crucial to this is an understanding of Buddhist tantric philosophy, in particular the idea, as expressed by Snellgrove (1959), as divine kingship or the *cakravātin*, who on account of his enlightened status is the ideal ruler, as he will govern according to higher principles than that of a worldly political figure. As such, the *cakravātin* embodies the dual aspects of governance and the state (the religious and the secular), in a similar way to which medieval monarchs were understood to embody the state. Yet, unlike medieval monarchs, kingship in Tibet, as Charles Ramble recently highlighted (2006), was contractual (between the king and ministers) and was not a prize sought but a burden shouldered at the request of others in order to benefit "benighted, rudderless subjects". The similarity to that idea and Hobbes' belief that without a monarch humanity would descend into its natural state of anarchy is remarkable and one that academics working on the definition of

Tibetan states, governance and kingship should not dismiss so easily. Whilst, Ramble, notes that the failure of a Tibetan king to uphold his side of the contract, could result in regicide or rebellion and thus precludes absolute monarchy, this does not negate the theoretical model of the *cakravātin* as the embodiment of *lugs gnyis* and by extension the state. As such the state and kingship in Tibetan society needs to be understood as a system of political organisation, which emerges from the legitimacy of a ruler, not only as a *cakravātin* or *dharmarāja*, but also through a social contract between the ruler and the ruled.

That is the theory, and theories are only useful when they contribute to our understanding of reality; in this case the political reality of state formation, governance and kingship in Sikkim. That is to say that the themes of the theoretical models of kingship, governance and state in Tibetan societies can be found in Sikkimese historical sources from the seventeenth century and it is certain that those themes take centre stage in the later historical narratives (see chapter one), but these themes occur for two separate reasons. The appearance of these themes in seventeenth century sources have to be understood as legitimising agents of the newly formed state and monarchy (chapter two) and not as a reflection of political reality; as the political reality of state formation in seventeenth century Sikkim (see chapters 3–5), however, was far more complex and was brought about, not by religious invitations to the first Sikkimese Chos rgyal (chapter one), but by conquest, alliance formation, and the subjugation of the population under the figure of the Chos rgyal. The reason they appear in later historical narratives is to characterise the formation of the Sikkimese state as the fruition of divine prophecy.

6. A Guide to the Sources

This book uses a variety of sources (many of which are reproduced in the appendices) from different genres of Tibetan literature including *gnas yig* or *lam yig* (guide books), *lung bstan* (prophecies), *gter ma* (treasure texts), *rgyal rabs* (royal genealogies), *rnam thar* (biography), *chos 'byung* (histories of religion), *lo rgyus* (chronicles) and *khrims yig* (legal documents). These genres can be classified into three groups. The first three genres noted above can be considered as religious literature, in that they relate directly or indirectly to religious themes. The second group (*rgyal rabs, chos 'byung, rnam thar*, and *lo rgyus*)

can be considered as histories or quasi-histories in that they concern themselves with the past and events/actors in the past. The final group is *khrims yig* or legal documents. This category includes a variety of literary styles from official decrees, laws, official registers and records, letters and treaties.

It would be possible to write an entire book on any one of the genres noted above, and so this short discussion here shall only ever be a brief glimpse into the variety of Tibetan literature. Given that there are a number of important works already in circulation regarding specific genres in Tibetan literature, I will not go into too much detail here and refer readers to those other works (Gyatso 1998, Cabezón and Jackson [eds] 1996, Vostrikov 1970, French 1995 etc.).

The *gnas yig* or *lam yig* genres of Tibetan literature are essentially guidebooks for pilgrims or lamas visiting the holy sites described in the book (or accounts of a lama's journey to a sacred place in the case of *lam yig*). Sikkimese *gnas yig* tend to describe the various places in Sikkim according to their outer, inner and secret meaning, using poetical language to describe the various religious qualities of Sikkim and the spiritual attainments one can achieve by either entering Sikkim, visiting the sites or meditating at the sites. They tend to be deeply religious accounts and are generally written for the spiritual practitioner. The one exception to this rule is *LTLY* which also includes a number of autobiographical passages detailing the way in which Lha btsun chen po entered Sikkim and his activities whilst there.

Lung bstan are highly cryptic texts, in as far as they are often very difficult to understand without reference to the context of the writer. Many also fall into the category of *gter ma* in that they are received as treasures and so are regarded as direct and truthful renditions of prophecy. Generally they detail events that will take place in the future (in terms of the time in which they were concealed and not the time they were discovered). One of the most important examples of this genre for Sikkimese history is the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi'i lung bstan*, which predicts the arrival in Sikkim of the three Tibetan lamas in the seventeenth century and their discovery of the first Sikkimese king (making up the quartet). Full details of this prophecy are given in chapter one.

As I have already discussed *gter ma* in this introduction I will move on to a discussion of historical literature. In this book I use a number of sources which can be considered as historical writings. By this I mean manuscripts, which have been written for the purpose of detail-

ing events that occurred in the past. There are a number of different historical genres in Tibetan literature (*rgyal rabs, chos 'byung, rnam thar*, and *lo rgyus*). Some of the key sources in this book fall within these broad categories. The *rgyal rabs* genre is different from other genres of historical literature as such works generally (though not always) recount the histories of royal lineages; one example in this book is *Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs*, in that it recounts the royal ancestry of one of the key Tibetan lamas active in Sikkim during the seventeenth century. It also contains stylistic elements of the *rnam thar* genre, in that it also is a biography of the above mentioned lama. *Rnam thar* as a genre can be described as biographical writing in that it recounts the life and times of important people (usually religious figures), and tends to be more distinct from *rgyal rabs* and *lo rgyus* being often hagiographical and fantastic. However, as can been seen with the *Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs*, this genre in Tibetan literature has the potential to be quite fluid, encompassing different styles and objectives. The term *lo rgyus* tends to be translated as annals or chronicles in that these works generally recount events in the past, but lack historical closure; they are not necessarily written for the purpose of presenting a historical narrative in the sense of a text with a beginning, middle and end, but tend to be records of historical events. Of course as with other genres of Tibetan literature there is also a high degree of fluidity regarding the content, composition and narrative styles of *lo rgyus*. In this book I have used an important source which has been classified as a *lo rgyus: La sogs lo rgyus*. In a later edition of this text it is also termed as a *rgyal rabs*, which is applicable given that the early sections of this manuscript recount the origin narratives of the Sikkimese kings.

The final group, which I have termed as *khrims yig*, incorporates a number of different genres of official, administrative or legal documentation. In this book I shall use a number of these texts, including official taxation records, treaties, land grants and petitions. These sources are crucial to improving our understanding of Sikkimese history, in particular social and political history. They tend to be less biased as the objective behind their composition is often administrative, and so they are not intended to present official histories or accounts of the past. In this way these documents are important for understanding the political and social formations of Sikkim.

This short note of genre in Tibetan literature is intended to provide some contextual information for the sources used in this book. It should not be considered the final word about the genres in question

but more as a discussion of the styles and categories of literature used in this book as primary sources.

7. The Chapters

In chapter two I present a summary of the historical narratives of Sikkim; in particular the narratives on the origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese and state formation. These narratives have contributed to the knowledge of history locally, and in this chapter I address some of those issues and raise a number of points regarding the problems inherent in these writings. One issue of some pertinence is the origin of these writings, many of which were written during the British period of Sikkimese history. I highlight a number of themes inherent in these writings in particular the theme of divine provenance, in relation to *gter ma* and the formation of the Sikkimese state.

In the third chapter I present the first seventeenth century source in this book, a source which is valuable to the student of early Sikkimese history. I note that whilst it shares some similarities with the historical narratives of chapter two, it also presents a number of hitherto, unknown events and actors in the seventeenth century. In addition I note the use of religious terminology and the importance of religious legitimacy for the young state. I note that even prior to the date of the establishment of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as the Chos rgyal of Sikkim, there were rudimentary systems of stratification and tax collection in place. This indicates that the start of the formation of the Sikkimese state predates the enthronement of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as Chos rgyal, thus changing the influence of the enthronement in early Sikkimese politics.

Chapter four and chapter five are devoted to the examination of the relative influence of two Tibetan lamas in the religious and political spheres of early Sikkim. Chapter four is devoted to Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin, a lama associated with the lineage of Zhig po gling pa and Byang gter. In this chapter, which is based on the *Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs*, I argue that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin seems to have been a lama of immense influence in Sikkim, an assertion that runs contrary to the historical narratives of chapter two. In chapter five I compare the information found in *Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs* with the writings of another Tibetan lama; Lha btsun chen po. According to the traditional histories it is Lha btsun chen po who is primarily responsible for the

formation of the Sikkimese state, the enthronement of the first Chos rgyal and the introduction and construction of Buddhist institutions. Using evidence from his own writings, the writings of the Fifth Dalai Lama and a local Sikkimese historian, I argue that it appears as if the position of Lha btsun chen po in traditional narratives is not borne out by the evidence from the period. Indeed I state that his position, relative to Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin, was minor in early Sikkim. I also discuss one key problem found within the chronology of Sikkimese history: the enthronement of the first Sikkimese king.

In chapter six I return to the political organisation of Sikkim during the seventeenth century. In particular I present two texts which radically change our perception of early Sikkimese history. The first text is an oath of agreement signed by representatives of the Sikkimese state and other leading figures from the different ethnic communities of the area. This text mentions a previous internal rebellion or war launched by Lepcha and Limbu groups against the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, and states that from the day of the signing of this treaty the different groups of Sikkim accepted the rule of the Rnam rgyal dynasty. The second manuscript is a detailed census of the Lepcha and Limbu populations in Sikkim. This manuscript provides the historian with a glimpse of the organisational capabilities of the early Sikkimese state.

In chapter seven, I return to the question of the construction of Sikkimese historical narratives. In the earlier chapters I illustrate considerable differences between evidence contained in source material from the seventeenth century and the later narratives. Such differences between the historical record and the historical narratives of Sikkim raise a number of important questions regarding the construction of history. In this chapter I attempt to offer an explanation for the construction of Sikkimese history, grounded in the tumultuous events of the War of Succession, the corresponding influence of 'Jigs med dpa' bo and the tradition of Lha btsun chen po and the ultimate arrival of the British in Sikkimese affairs. I argue that these events contributed to the construction of Sikkimese history on the basis of religious and political concerns.

CHAPTER TWO

LOCAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVES: TIBETO-SIKKIMESE ORIGINS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SIKKIMESE STATE

In this chapter, I shall attempt to present a general introduction to the popular historical narratives of Sikkim, which concerns themselves with the two periods of Sikkimese history that are the foci for this book: the origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese people and the 'formation' of the Sikkimese state in the seventeenth century. Rather than present a dry rendition of these various narratives, I shall attempt to amalgamate a number of popular renditions into a single narrative of the historical traditions in Sikkim. Indeed many of the individual renditions share similar themes and motifs as well as a general ideological viewpoint. It is not my intention to discuss this viewpoint here as throughout the course of this book I hope to develop an understanding of the relative positions of these narratives and the reasons for their construction. Therefore, this chapter shall be limited to a presentation of some of the general themes, events, and actors found in popular Sikkimese historical narratives. This, it is hoped, will help to situate the reader and serve as the point of comparison for the arguments developed later in this book.

This chapter is divided into four principal sections. The first section is a general introduction to the sources used in the compilation of the historical narratives below. The second deals with the prominent narrative of origin, which focuses on the life and migration of a prince from Khams mi nyag and his final settlement in the regions around Sikkim and the Chumbi valley. The third outlines the narrative of 'state' formation in the seventeenth century and the results and organisational practices established to rule Sikkim in accordance with the religio-political order. The final section concludes this discussion of Sikkimese historical narratives by identifying a number of key themes, motifs and some general remarks on structure.

1. Introduction to the Sources

The amalgamated narratives that appear below are drawn from three principal sources, all of which were written during the period 1860–1908.

The key source, and latest, amongst these is *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (*BGR*), which was written in 1908; preceding *BGR* in date is *The Gazetteer of Sikhim* (*GoS*), an official publication of the Bengal Secretariat in 1894; the earliest source is *Bla ma che mtshan gsum 'bras ljongs sbas gnas phebs tshul* (*BMS*), written *circa* 1860. Thus all these sources can be dated to after the advent of British interest in the eastern Himalaya following the Gorkha war and the Anglo-Sikkimese treaty of 1817[1] which saw the return of Sikkimese land, including Darjeeling, captured by Nepal in the Sino-Nepalese war of 1788–1792.

The history of British intervention in the Himalaya began smoothly enough with the restoration of Sikkimese lands in 1817; however, with the Ilam affair and the feuds and murders which resulted,[2] by 1828 the British began to take further interest in the security of the shared borders of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Following this a grant to settle in Darjeeling was issued to the British by the Sikkimese king in 1835 and with the Hooker-Campbell controversy of 1849[3] saw the annexation of all Sikkimese territory south of the Rangeet River. If the controversy of 1849 led Sikkim to surrender its land in the plains and Darjeeling, the treaty of 1861[4] guaranteed British supremacy in the hills and in effect

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[1] Also known as the Treaty of Titalia (see Moktan 1997: 8–9 for a reproduction of this treaty).

[2] This was the Ko Ta rebellion of 1828. The Palace Collection, now under the custodianship of Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, contain a number of interesting letters and royal promulgations regarding this event; the subject of this event is also contained in the oldest Lepcha documents (see Sprigg, R.K. 1997).

[3] In the period after the land grant for British settlement was issued many Sikkimese subjects fled to Darjeeling to seek refuge from bonded labour on Sikkimese estates. Many of which were considered criminals under Sikkimese law. Furthermore, the Sikkimese government considered British settlement and the land grant in accordance with Sikkimese land law. This gives the right to settlement and cultivation of previously unsettled or uncultivated land; however, those settlers were considered to be bound by Sikkimese law and thus fall under the jurisdiction of the Sikkimese government. This is understandable given that the British were liable to pay an annual rent equal to the value of uncultivated land. The British, however, considered Darjeeling as British territory and thus subject to British law. Therefore, Sikkimese subjects in bonded labour were considered slaves and thus were given asylum based on anti-slavery legislation introduced in the British Empire on 1 August 1838. The Sikkimese government feared the depopulation of Sikkim and repeatedly ordered the British to return runaway subjects, to which the British refused. This led the Sikkimese government to retaliate with the arrest of Hooker and Campbell in 1849, when they entered Sikkimese territory.

[4] Alex McKay presented an interesting paper on the subject of this treaty at the 12th IATS conference in August 2010 held at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. This paper is due to be published in Mullard (ed) *in press*.

placed serious restrictions on the Government of Sikkim. However, it was not until the 1880s that Sikkim was reduced to a protectorate[5] with the real power being wielded by the British 'representative': the first Political Officer; John Claude White.

It was within the historical context of British involvement in the Himalaya[6] that the three sources, to be discussed in this chapter, were written. The earliest source (*BMS*) was written by a Sikkimese monk, and survives now only as a copy in the compilation *Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs gnas yig dang rgyal rabs bzhugs so*, edited by Gung rdo rje in 1972. In the compilation this text, which is 14 folios in length, follows directly after *PSLG*, and like the latter is written in a cursive script. The copied text also contains numerous *errata*, much like *PSLG* (Mullard 2005a). The original manuscript was written by one Skal bzang chos dbyings, the '*Vajra* Master' (*rdo rje slob dpon*) of Rig 'dzin mchog grub gling monastery (Do/Stod lung monastery), at sometime during the 1860s.

The second source which is used below in the amalgamated narrative is *GoS*. I have refrained from relying on this source and have only referred to it when it provides an interesting insight or different information from the more common account of *BGR*. The sections of interest are the opening 16 pages of the historical section and parts of the introduction to *GoS*. It is generally believed that the majority of the information found in this historical summary was taken from an earlier text, accredited to either the G.yang thang or the La sogs dpon po,[7] and a number of oral histories and earlier fragmentary sources

[5] The history of the British protectorate over Sikkim is long and detailed for further information see: NIT: 68–83.

[6] For further details: McKay 1997, gives an interesting overview of British-Tibetan relations in the post Younghusband expedition era. The history of British involvement in Tibet begins ultimately with their interactions with the Sikkimese. Prior to the Younghusband expedition, the Sikkimese government had attempted to negotiate with the Tibetans, on behalf of the British. This placed the Sikkimese in a difficult position both in regards to the Tibetans and the British. In the early 1880s Sikkimese politics oscillated between a pro-Tibetan and a pro-British stance, depending on the relative ascendancy of various political factions within the Sikkimese aristocracy. The Kang gsar pa minister in alliance with his brother the Pho gdong Lama [also spelt Pho brang] undermined royal authority by negotiating directly with the British, who viewed them as potential allies. This arrangement ultimately led to the declining fortunes of the Sikkimese monarchy and the establishment of the British protectorate.

[7] This family (the Brag dkar pa) has been the subject of an earlier article: Mullard 2003b.

such as SMPd79 (1819)[8] and the Padma g.yang rtse history (which is reputed to have been destroyed during the Nepal-Sikkim war).

The final source is *BGR*, which as noted above was written in 1908. There is an English translation by 'Kazi Dousandup' [sic],[9] a Tibeto-Sikkimese man in the service of the British administration. There exist at least three renditions of the Tibetan version: in the Sikkimese palace, in the private library of the Queen mother of Bhutan, and in the library of T.D. Densapa.[10] The original manuscript is accredited to Mthu stobs rnam rgyal and his wife Ye shes sgrol ma, the king and queen of Sikkim from 1874. Whilst most scholars believe that Ye shes sgrol ma was primarily responsible for writing this historical work, there is a view in Sikkim that *BGR* was actually a later edition of the historical work written by the G.yang thang dpon po or the La sogs dpon po (noted above). Whoever was actually responsible for authoring *BGR* is, perhaps, irrelevant as the work clearly received royal clearance by being attributed to the king and queen of Sikkim.

2. The Tibetan Migration Narrative

At present there is little evidence to indicate the precise origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese population who 'ruled' Sikkim. However, what we can say with some degree of certainty is that there were probably different migrations to Sikkim which occurred at different times, and that these waves of immigration into Greater-Sikkim[11] came from

[8] The Sikkimese Manuscript Project Documents (SMPd) are documents that were collected and digitised by the Sikkimese Manuscript Project in 2004–2005. The current incarnation of the earlier Sikkimese Manuscript Project is the Sikkimese Royal Archive Project, in which documents from the Sikkimese Palace were digitised and catalogued. In the Bibliography of this book the reader will find documents referred to with two different numbering systems: PD (which refers to document specifically from the Sikkimese palace) and SMPd (referring to documents collected during the life of the Sikkimese Manuscript Project).

[9] This is the same Kazi Dawa Samdup who worked under Charles Bell at the Gangtok residency and with Evans-Wentz.

[10] This is the famous Barmiok Collection, (now housed in Gangtok) from where numerous rare manuscripts were microfilmed and subsequently published. After the exile of the Dalai Lama T.D. Densapa presented a number of important Tibetan works to the LTWA, where there still is a Densapa collection. T.D. Densapa is also known under these titles: Rai Bahadur, Barmiok [Bar myag] A mthing. Barmiok refers to the ancestral estate of this family; they are of Lepcha ancestry.

[11] 'Greater-Sikkim' denotes the wider region of Sikkim (which may fall outside the contemporary boundaries of the state), a region of the eastern Himalaya stretching

many different locations both within Tibet and along the Himalayan ranges, and continued well into the twentieth century.[12] For example there are a number of clans in Sikkim that claim or can trace their ancestry to regions of Bhutan, such as Ha and Spa gro. Similarly there are clans who are associated with noble families or petty rulers of the Sa skya-Yuan period of Tibetan history (c.1256–1366). Whilst some cases are little more than spurious claims to enhance the historical depth, and thus respectability, of the lineage, other claims are more believable, if not wholly accurate. These different movements of people from both Tibet and across the Himalaya make it almost impossible to locate a particular region from where the Tibeto-Sikkimese as the 'collective ethnicity', portrayed in contemporary political movements, originated.

As noted in the introductory chapter of this book, there is a distinct problem with establishing suitable ethnonyms for the populations in Sikkim. This dilemma has been caused, in part, by contemporary political designations which have led to the overarching terms of Bhutia, Lho po and 'Bras ljongs pa being applied to most people speaking Tibetan dialects with the notable exception of Tibetan refugees and Nepali immigrants (Sherpa etc.).[13] Such political designations paste a veneer of homogeneity over what is, in reality, a rather more complex situation, based on clan structures and origin histories. As is noted in the discussion of Sikkimese clan (Appendix II) there are well over thirty clans and twenty sub-clans in Sikkim (Lepcha and Limbu are excluded).[14] Some of these clan names provide hints to the origins, occupations or religious persuasions of the original proto-clan, while others are merely the names of the earliest known ancestors. However, out of these clans and their associated origin stories only twelve clans and two sub-clans are referred to as being of 'pure' descent, i.e. descended from the protagonist, or his followers, in the dominant

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from the watershed of the Arun river in the west to the Wang chu river in the east; the Mchod rten nyi ma range in the north to the plains of Siliguri in the south.

[12] Excluding the migration of Tibetan refugees after the Chinese occupation of Tibet there seems to have been a substantial movement of Tibetans from eastern Tibet during the 1920s. These migrants settled in regions close to the Sikkim-Bhutan border.

[13] It should be noted here that in today's political climate many of the groups mentioned above have taken the surname Bhutia or Denjongpa in order to reap the benefits associated with being a member of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. According to the Indian Constitution such groups receive benefits from state-led affirmative action programs.

[14] For the names and details of these clans and sub-clans see appendix II.

origin myth: Gyad 'bum bsags. These clans are collectively known as *stong dus ru*[s] *bzhi* [Sic.] *babs mtshan brgyad*[15] (The eight clans descended from the four *rus*[16] of a thousand each). It is the narrative of Gyad 'bum bsags to which we will turn our attention now.

The story of the origins of the Sikkimese people begins, according to *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs*, with the history of the eighth-century Tibetan king Khri srong lde btsan. This king is said to have had three sons, two of which rule the Tibetan empire at different times: Mu ne btsan po and Sad na legs; the middle son Mu rub btsan po travels to eastern Tibet.[17] It is from this second son that the Sikkimese kings are said to descend. The descendants of this figure rule in the region of Khams mi nyag for twenty-five generations.[18]

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[15] There are numerous spellings for this phrase, examples include: *stong 'du ru bzhi 'bab tshan brgyad*, *stong sde ru bzhi 'babs mtshan/tshan brgyad*. The translation of this phrase may be another example of attempting to contrive meaning from a problematic expression.

[16] Many Sikkimese works have translated *rus/ru* as regiment, which is highly misleading. *Ru gzhis* [Sic. *bzhi*] actually refers to the four divisions of territory in the period of the Tibetan empire. In later Sikkimese land grants; such as YA1, YA2 and YA8 from the private collection of the Brag dkar pa family; from the early eighteenth century there is often an introductory paragraph which associates early Sikkim with being a part of the four *ru*(*s*) of *Dbus* and *Gtsang* YA8 line 3 reads: *bar dbus gtsang ru bzhi'i char gtogs pa'i sbas dpal gyi 'bras mo ljongs zhes bya ba*. '[This very place] which is known as the hidden land 'Bras mo ljongs and which forms a part of the four ru of [the middle province] Dbus gtsang […]. Whereas *rus* has a variety of meanings such as bone, family, lineage and clan. *Rus* is also encountered in the maternal and paternal lineages of Tibet and Sikkim, whereby *rus* relate to the male line (and clan) and *sha* relates to the maternal lineage (and clan) as descent in Sikkim is now patrilinneal a child is considered to be from the clan of his father.

[17] *BGR* 2003: 22–23. *De'i rgyal rgyud* [of Khri srong lde'u btsan] *sras gsum sku 'khrungs pa / mu ne btsan po mu rub btsan po dang / chos rgyal 'jing yon sad na legs dang gsum / mu rub btsan po mdo khams byang du gshegs / ces gsung pa bzhin /*. The only problems with this account are the deep historical uncertainties that surround the figure of Mu rub (rum) btsan po and his exile from central Tibet. Michael Aris discusses the life of this prince of the Yar klungs dynasty at length and ultimately concludes that there is little certainty regarding the location of his exile from the Tibetan court as some traditions claim he was exiled to Lho brag, whilst others maintain he fled to Mdo khams. However, despite the flight of Mu rub btsan po his body was ultimately buried in Central Tibet amongst the tombs of the Tibetan kings. For further details see Aris, 1979: 73–79.

[18] In other versions the lineage of the *btsan po* of Tibet is absent and the origins of the Khams mi nyag kings is accredited to the migrations of the divine king Indrabodhi from India to Tibet *BGR* 23: *Rgya gar chos rgyal Indra bhu ti'i gdung re zhig gnas 'thor ba'i tshul gyi mi nyag tu phebs te mi nyag gi rgyal po mdzad….* This is the view shared by the author of *LSG* (see chapter 3 page 61 and appendix IV). This is similar to the origin myths surrounding the Tibetan emperors (for details see Karmay 2003 and page 49 below) There are other stories which link the Sikkimese kings to the Dar

After that time the crown Prince of Khams mi nyag[19] receives a vision from the local deity of the area, who tells him that his lineage was prophesied, by Guru Rinpoche, to leave their current location and open up the sacred land of Sikkim. Upon receiving this vision the crown Prince together with his family and four sons leave Khams mi nyag on a pilgrimage to central Tibet.[20] At this point there is confusion as to where they first arrive. Many oral accounts claim that this group first reach Lho brag and then head to Lhasa; whereas both *LSG* and *BGR* state that the princes of Khams mi nyag arrive in Lhasa first.

Once they arrive in Lhasa the crowned prince visits the Jo khang in order to offer prayers for a safe journey and a beneficial pilgrimage, and whilst he is praying the statue of the Jo bo speaks to him. He is told to proceed to 'Bras mo ljongs as his descendants are destined to rule the sacred land. This second supernatural visit does not deter him from completing his pilgrimage and he departs from Lhasa for Sa skya, the town of his guru. Upon reaching there the prince finds that the Sa skya hierarch is constructing a new Lha khang but is having problems erecting the main columns of the temple. So the eldest son[21] of the prince manages to raise the four main columns by his own efforts and is hence given the nickname Gyad 'bum bsags[22] and also receives a wife from the 'Khon family.[23] Around this time another supernatural event occurs: from the sky there falls a prophetic letter, within

se branch of the Mi nyag kings who migrated to Byang in Gtsang and married into the family of Sa skya. We shall return to the ethnonyms *dar* and *se* and this branch of the Mi nyag royal family in chapter 3 pages 70–71.

[19] In many of the oral stories we are not told his name. In a number of the accounts from west Sikkim this figure is given the name Gu ru bkra shis, but this name is also the one given to the father (in the oral histories) of the first king of Sikkim.

[20] It may be important to note that *LSG* does not describe this spiritual vision and the crowned prince of Khams mi nyag is completely absent in this account and is replaced by the Sikkimese cultural hero Gyad 'bum bsags (for details see Mullard 2005a).

[21] Some oral sources tell us that he was not the eldest son but rather the middle son of three. In the above account it will be recalled that the prince had four sons and not three. In some sources, like the above one, the number of sons has been increased to provide a simple reason for the *stong sdus rus bzhi*. i.e. the four clans of Sikkim descended from these four brothers.

[22] This is understood locally as: 'The accumulation of 100,000 champions'. This may be another example of contriving meaning from a peculiar name.

[23] Some of the oral versions do not specifically mention the 'Khon family but may refer instead to 'a lady from Sa skya'. In one case it was recalled that the wife of Gyad was a lady from Gtsang of noble birth.

which it states that one of his sons will enter Sikkim and bring benefit to the world.[24]

Gyad 'bum bsags together with his father and brothers go in search for Sikkim but stop on the way at Pakshi (possibly referring to Phag ri), where they build a temple, and one of Gyad's brothers remains as abbot, and at Phag ri (or in some versions Kham bu) they construct another temple called Bsam grub lha khang. It is in Phag ri that the prince (Gyad's father) dies and one lama from Kham bu called Shab-dung Lhari performs the funeral rites. Gyad 'bum bsags is unperturbed by his father's death and continues his move southwards through Gro mo and Chu mo gshang and finally reaches Chumbi where he constructs a house.[25]

Meanwhile news of Gyad 'bum bsags['] strength has spread and a Bhutanese man, who is also renowned for his strength, seeks Gyad 'bum bsags in order to challenge him to a wrestling match. Our hero defeats the Bhutanese man by ripping off his arm; his challenger leaves mourning the loss of his arm and thinks of a way to exact revenge. He hatches an evil plan to kill Gyad 'bum bsags by sending a wrathful spirit, but Gyad 'bum bsags is spiritually superior to the spirit and performs a sacrifice of a yak to persuade the spirit to leave.

Gyad 'bum bsags stays in Chumbi for a further three years but is unable to have children. However, given his proximity to Sikkim, he hears that in that land there is a Lepcha wizard / chief who can solve

[24] SMPd79 (unedited), gives a slightly different account of the events surrounding the migration from Sa skya to the region of the Chumbi Valley: *khams mi snyag tu sdong gi brgyud pa a lu 'dung* [recte: a'u ldong] *zhes bod yul du phebs te/ dpal sa skya'i chen po rang mchod yon du 'gyur te/ sa skya gtsug lhag khang chen po bzhengs pa'i sbyin bdag mdzad de/ slob dpon chen po'i lung du mngags te/ yul gro mo'i stod phyug 'go bshong bde ba nas rim par gnas 'dul du 'phebs*. "The [group] called the A'u ldong, which descends from the sdong in Khams mi nyag arrived in Tibet, where the *mchod yon* relationship developed [with] the great Sa skya bla ma, and on account of which they acted as sponsor for the building of the great temple of Sa skya and as an order of the great spiritual master [they] were dispatched and so from the blissful place of upper Phyug 'go valley of the country of Gro mo they arrived and gradually subdued the region."

[25] Until the late nineteenth century, close to the summer palace of the Sikkimese royal family in Chumbi there stood ruins that were said to be the remains of Gyad 'bum sags' house. The summer palace was first established during the reign of the third Sikkimese Chos rgyal Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, on his receipt of the pasture estates of lower Chumbi from the Tibetan government. However the palace only became functional as the summer residence of the royal family after the re-location of the Sikkimese capital to Dbang sdus rtse pho brang (near modern Pho gdong) following the Nepal-Sikkim war of the 1780s.

his problem. So together with sixteen followers he enters the land of Sikkim through the Chu la pass (some versions are not clear on the route that was taken).[26] Once he arrives in Sikkim, he meets with an old couple and asks them whether they know of the Lepcha chief Teg kong teg (as represented in figure 2.1 below). They reply in the negative but Gyad 'bum bsags is suspicious of the couple so he orders his followers to hide. After some time the old couple leave and Gyad and his followers track the couple until they reach a bamboo house. Once they entered the house Gyad sees the old Lepcha man sitting on a high bamboo throne, adorned with regal implements such as a crown of feathers and a robe, and at this point Gyad realises that the old couple are Teg kong teg and his wife.

Over *chang* Gyad explains his problem to Teg who agrees to help him. Gyad 'bum bsags returns to Chumbi, where after some time his wife becomes pregnant three times and gives birth to three sons.[27] Upon the birth of his third son Gyad decides to return to Sikkim to offer prayers to the local divinities and a feast of thanks for Teg; at the same time Teg also thinks he will visit Gyad 'bum bsags and heads toward Chumbi. The couple meet in a place called Dong tsa dong and decide to perform the prayers at that place and hold a feast to symbolize their connection and friendship. They further reinforce the bond of friendship through a series of oaths, whereby animals are sacrificed and the divinities of the land and ancestors are called to bear witness.[28]

Gradually Gyad 'bum bsags extends his control over the Lepchas and appends Sikkim to his territory. Gyad 'bum bsags' three sons, who are collectively known as Brag btsan dar pa spun gsum,[29] settle in Sikkim, though the middle son, called Mi dpon rab, becomes the most influential. Mi dpon rab has four sons, from which the *rus bzhi* or four

[26] This pass is of considerable antiquity and was the main route from Tibet to Sikkim, until the Palace of the Sikkimese kings was shifted to Gangtok in 1888, after which the Natu la became the principal trade route between Tibet and Sikkim, until Mdzes leb pass (Jalep of British sources) was opened as a trade route between Tibet and British controlled Kalimpong.

[27] *PSLG* (folio 5.a) only mentions the birth of one son, named Brag btsan dar, who later rules Sikkim.

[28] This event is said to have occurred (according to local tradition) in Kabi at a site of standing stones. The site can still be seen today, though it appears that this site of small megalithic structures is of some antiquity. These stones are pointed out as the site of this event and their very existence seems, according to the local tradition, justification enough for the event.

[29] *GoS*: 28.



Figure 2.1 The 'unity statue' in Gangtok Bazaar. This statue commemorates the meeting between Teg kong teg and Gyad 'bum sags. Photo by author.



Figure 2.2 Thangka depicting the Rnal 'byor mched bzhi. From left to right: Kaḥ thog kun tu bzang po, Lha btsun chen po, Chos rgyal phun tshogs rnam rgyal and Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin. Photo by author.

main clans of Sikkim descend. It is from Mi dpon rab'[s][30] youngest son that the kings of Sikkim descend in the following way: Guru bkra shis was the youngest son of Mi dpon rab, his son was called Zhal nga a phug, who in turn had a son named Guru bstan 'dzin and his son was the first king of Sikkim—Phun tshogs rnam rgyal.[31] Thus only six generations according to *GoS*, five generations according to *BMS* and seven according to *BGR* passed from the time of leaving Khams mi nyag until the coronation of the first Chos rgyal of Sikkim.

3. State Formation Narratives

There are a number of accounts regarding the formation of the Sikkimese state which may be termed as 'orthodox' narrative histories,[32] and which, for various reasons, have become a *communis opinio*. In Sikkim *BGR* is best regarded as an example of orthodox history and this particular work, on account of its availability, has become imbued with an authenticity often divorced from its actual standard as a study of history. In recent years a publication of this text, in Tibetan, has been produced (2003), whereas previously only English typescript translations were widely available. Most of the works mentioned above (namely: *BMS* and *GoS*) follow a similar chronology set around the story of the coronation of the first Sikkimese king and the activities of three Tibetan Lamas in Sikkim during the 1640s. This account will be recounted here in brief and will mainly draw upon references from *BGR*, which has been selected over other similar sources on account of its availability for consultation.[33]

[30] This also appears as Mi dpon rabs in some sources. This gives an alternative reading of 'lineage of the lord of men' as opposed to 'Supreme lord of men'. The conflation of rab/rabs also happens with the Bon po figure of Gshen rab/rabs, which was pointed out to me by Charles Ramble.

[31] This is according to *The Gazetteer of Sikhim*. There are numerous versions of this lineage in a number of sources: *BMS*: Gyad 'bum sags, unnamed son, Chos rgyal gu ru bstan 'dzin, Chos rgyal a phag, Chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal; *BGR*: Gyad 'bum sags, Mi dpon rab, Gu ru bkra shis, Jo bo nag po, Jo bo a phag, and Gu ru bstan 'dzin, whose son was Phun tshogs rnam rgyal.

[32] Examples include: *BMS*, *Bstan rtsis 'das lo mgo 'tshems* (1895), and the Lingmo Chronicle, 1899).

[33] *BGR* contains a number of chronological contradictions and other errors, which are detailed below. In the references that follow notes to both English, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology edition (NIT), and Tibetan versions (2003 edition) have been included. The variant versions of *BGR* have not been published; most are held in pri-

BGR begins the coronation story of the first Sikkimese king, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal (1604–c.1670), by introducing the main character of the event: Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597–1654), founder of *rdzogs chen* in Sikkim. We are told briefly about his life, his place of birth, family and principal teachers, before he begins his travels with thirty-five disciples, who had faith in the *sbas yul*. He receives a vision in the Wood Monkey year (1644) and in the following year, the Wood Bird (1645), meets with one of his principle teachers, 'Ja' tshon snying po (1585–1656), who tells him to work for the benefit of all beings and gives him instructions in the relevant *gter ma* prophesies,[34] before beginning the final part of his journey to Sikkim. On the 13th day of the 5th month of the Fire Horse year (1646) he receives a vision in which he sees the path leading to the *sbas yul*.

On his way into the hidden land he meets with another Lama, Kaḥ thog kun tu bzang po, who had attempted but failed to open the northern door to the *sbas yul*. Lha btsun chen po informs the other Lama that the northern door was sealed and can only be opened by himself and so directs Kaḥ thog kun tu bzang po to the western door, which he was destined to open. After this Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med and his disciples continue on the route until they reach a gorge. Despite this obstacle Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med flies over the cliffs and although he does not return for seven days and his disciples fear he is dead, he returns to show them the northern door. Together they trace the route through Rdzong ri to Yog bsam.[35] Meanwhile Kaḥ thog kun tu bzang po, despite his previous wanderings and hardships, had gradually arrived in the *sbas yul* from the western door via the Seng la pass.[36]

A third Lama, Mnga' bdag pa phun tshogs rig 'dzin, was also making his way to Sikkim, leaving Zhigatse on the 25th day of the 3rd month

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vate collections and are only known to a handful of scholars. The English edition is known as "The History of Sikkim".

[34] NIT: 15–16; *BGR* 2003: 38–39. (Line 5) *dpon 'khor sum cu so lnga tsam bcas gangs ljongs kyi skye rgu bsam yod rnams sbas yul la 'jug ran no*.... (line 9) *de nas shing mo bya lo hor zla bcu gnyis pa'i nyer lnga'i nyin bang ri bkra shis 'od 'bar du sprul pa'i gter ston 'ja' tshon snying pos 'gro ba mang po'i don gyis shig ces phyi nang gi lung bstan mang du gnang/.*

[35] NIT: 16. *BGR* 2003: 39–41. Yog bsam is in the modern district of West Sikkim

[36] NIT: 17. *BGR* 2003: 41. *byang sgo la sogs pa'i gnas kyi phu mda' thams cad du dka' ba du ma'i sgo nas sa'i khungs bcad nub sgo seng la'i lam phye nas rim bzhin phebs/.*

of the Water horse year (1642).[37] According to *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* these three Lamas meet in Yog bsam nor bu sgang,[38] where Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med states the need for a fourth man, a layman, to rule the hidden land, by quoting from the works of Rin chen gling pa (14th century): "Amongst my four saintly incarnations [there is] one who is like the lion, the king of all animals and who will seize this land [with] strength and valour."[39] Quoting another prophecy in which it was said that "a man from the direction of Sgang, bearing the name Phun tshogs, would arise". They decide that a search party should be sent to seek out and invite the final member of the quartet.[40]

The group arrive in Gangtok where they find Phun tshogs rnam rgyal milking his cows, and inform him of the invitation sent by the Lamas in Yog bsam. He then proceeds towards Yog bsam with a retinue of ministers.[41] When they reach Yog bsam, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal is enthroned as the first king of Sikkim by the three Tibetan Lamas, (see figure 2.2 on page 42 above) and given the eight auspicious symbols and the seven objects of the *cakravātin*.[42] It is commonly believed that this event occurred in the Water Horse year[43] of the eleventh *rab byung* (1642).[44] The site of this coronation, marked

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[37] NIT: 17. *BGR* 2003: 43. *chu pho rta lo'i zla gsum pa'i tshes nyer lnga la rgyal khab chen po gzhis rtser rim par phebs te/*. Note the chronological discrepancy between the dates of arrival in Sikkim for Phun tshogs rig 'dzin (1642) and Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med (1646).

[38] *BmS*: 7b1–8a1, gives a brief description of the arrival of the Tibetan Lamas and the coronation of the first Sikkimese king.

[39] *BGR* 2003: 44. *rin chen gling pa'i gter byang las nga yi sprul pa rnal 'byor mched bzhi las/ gcig ni ri dwags rgyal po seng ge bzhin/ snying stobs drag po gnas 'di 'dzin par byed/*.

[40] NIT: 18. *BGR* 2003: 44. *sgang gi phyogs nas phun tshogs ming can 'byung…sgang thog phyogs su phun tshogs mtshan can gdan zhur 'gro dgos*. Note also the fact that Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was invited to rule as per the tradition discussed in Charles Ramble's article (2006) on Tibetan traditions of kingship and mentioned in the introduction to this book.

[41] NIT: 18. *BGR* 2003: 44–45. Here *BGR* gives details of the route taken by Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and his group beginning at Rumtek, where they halted for one night: *de nas bang mi rnams kyis gdan zhu'i zhu 'phrin snyan du gsol bas dus bab rten 'brel 'grigs par dgongs te chos rgyal phun tshogs rnam rgyal yab sras blon 'khor dang bcas chas te rum bteg tu gnas mal mdzad/*.

[42] NIT: 19. *BGR* 2003: 48. *mnga' dbul gyi dbang sgrub mdzad nas dbang bskur dang 'brel/ slar yang rgyal srid sna bdun bkra shis rdzas rtags sogs dpa' bo brtan bzhugs dang bcas gser khri mnga' gsol zhus.*

[43] The Lingmo (Gling mo) chronicle also states in the entry for the Water Horse year (1642): *Phun tshogs rnam rgyal gser khrir mnga' gsol lo 'dir mdzad/*.

[44] NIT: 19. *BGR* 2003: 48. *ye shu'i 'das lo chig stong drug brgya bzhi bcu zhes gnyis dang bod lugs rab byung bcu gcig chu rta lor mkha' spyod yangs pa'i ljongs 'dir mnga'*

by a stone throne (figure 2.3) and a footprint of Lha btsun chen po, is pointed out in Yog bsam to this day.

The account in *BGR* continues by detailing the monasteries that were constructed in Sikkim the first being Sgrub sde monastery, built by Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med. In the following year (1643) Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin built the Lha khang dmar po, and Kun tu bzang po built the Kaḥ thog monastery.[45] Phun tshogs rnam rgyal also built a fortress in the Yog bsam region, on the hill of Bkra shis steng kha.[46] Following this brief section on the foundations of the first Sikkimese monasteries, the authors then discuss the political administration of the state and its political borders.

The state administration, we are told, consisted of twelve Tibeto-Sikkimese ministers and twelve Lepcha *rdzong dpon*, giving rise to a two-tiered but bi-ethnic political class. The borders of the state extended from Dibdala (?) in the north to Naxalbari and Titalia in the south, while the western border stretched up to Wa lung and then followed the course of the Arun River. The eastern border extended up to Thang la in the north-east.[47]

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dbang bsgyur ba'i chos kyi rgyal po chen por mnga' gsol/. In an earlier publication (Mullard 2003a) I noted that the association of this date with the formation of the Sikkimese kingdom is interesting in light of wider Tibetan developments during this year.

[45] *BmS*: 8a–9a, gives a slightly different list of monasteries. Here it states that Lha btsun chen po built Gsang sngags chos gling monastery (near modern Pelling [pad gling]) and Kaḥ thog kun tu bzang po built a monastery simply named Rdog dgon.

[46] NIT: 19–20. *BGR* 2003: 49. *chos rgyal phun tshogs rnam rgyal dang grwa btsun rnams mgrin gcig gis lha btsun chen por gdan sa sgrub sde zhig 'debs par nan gyis gsol ba btab pas zhal gyis bzhes te sgrub sde dgon phyag btab par mdzad/ chu lug zla bcu gcig tshes gsum nyin mnga' bdag pas lha khang dmar po bzhengs/ kaḥ thog pas kaḥ thog dgon bzhengs/ chos rgyal chen pos bkra shis steng kha'i rdzongs bzhengs/.*

[47] NIT: 20. *BGR* 2003: 49. The section regarding the borders has been omitted in the recent Tibetan publication, which details the organisation of the Tibeto-Sikkimese ministers and the Lepcha *rdzong dpon* and then discusses the religious significance of the formation of Sikkim: *lho mon thams cad dbang du bsdus te lho rigs* [Tibeto-Sikkimese] *rus tshan bcu gnyis nang nas bka' blon bcu gnyis bkod/ de zhin du phu mda' bar kyi mon rigs* [Lepcha] *rus tshan gral nas mon rdzong bcu gnyis bkod*. Here *BGR* discusses the appointment of officials to the rank of Chancellor (in the Sikkimese context: *Phyag mdzod*) and minister (*blon po*) before quoting from Ratna gling pa's (1403–1479) treasure text: *ratna'i gter byang las de ltar nga yi sprul pa mched bzhi yis/ gnas de the tshom med par phye bar gyur/ gnas de phye nas lo bdun bar du ni/ 'dzam gling bod yul skyid pa'i nyi ma shar/ chos byed bshad sgrub yar ngo'i zla ltar 'phel/ zhes*…



Figure 2.3 The coronation throne at Yog bsam. Photo by author.



Figure 2.4 View of the centre of *Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs* (Bkra shis sdings) from the south. Photo by author.

4. Conclusions and Context

There are a number of themes which run through both the narratives discussed above. The most pertinent to the study of Sikkimese history is undoubtedly the theme of religious provenance: i.e. the divine as agent, pushing human individuals along a pre-destined plan, towards an ultimate *telos* i.e. the establishment of a Buddhist kingdom in the Himalaya. The other minor themes of these 'historical' narratives either play into this general theme or, as is often the case, serve as points to explain certain practices or anomalies in either the historical record or cultural-sociological elements of Sikkimese society. In cruder terms, the historical narratives are imbued with an ideological goal or *telos*; namely the justification of and for the formation of a royal dynasty.

In the 'origin' narrative, the minor themes of the secular-sacred dynasty of the Tibetan empire feed into the wider theme of religious provenance. Not only is the sacred character of the Sikkimese dynasty highlighted, but there is also a 'secular' or worldly dynamic (even if constructed under the guise of religion) at play, which adds legitimacy to the establishment of the Sikkimese state. This is reinforced through the association of the Sikkimese royal family with the lineage of Khri srong lde btsan. The premise here is that Khri srong lde btsan, as portrayed in popular Tibetan tradition of the *phyi dar*, combines a prominent divine quality with a, somewhat less important, 'worldly' quality as the emperor of Tibet. In other words, Khri srong lde btsan is characterised as the one who built Bsam yas invited Buddhist saints to Tibet (the most important for this context being Guru Rinpoche) and promoted the development of Buddhism.[48] Although, he was historically a ruler of the Tibetan empire his importance as a character is not based on that alone, nor his political activities, but more on his religious actions (Dargyay 2003: 364). In short the political acts, or for

[48] The *btsan po* of the Tibetan imperial era were perceived as having divine characteristics as is witnessed through the use of the title *lha sras* (divine son), as can be seen on some of the old inscriptions from that era (see Richardson 1985 for examples). This term, however, is connected to the origin myths of the first Tibetan kings who descended from the sky on to a holy mountain and so were connected to the gods of the sky i.e. the *lha* (Haarh 2003: 143). This also relates to the early threefold division of space and divinity: the sky, associated with the *lha*; the earth, associated with the btsan; the subterranean world, associated with the *klu*. The divine characteristics of the Tibetan emperors and the associated origin narratives have been the subject of a number of articles (Tucci 2003, and Karmay 2003a reprinted in McKay 2003).

that matter historical facts, are irrelevant for later Tibetans, what is more important is the fact that the Emperors embody the dominance of the sacred over the temporal world (Dargyay 2003: 365). Whatever, the historicity of the divine associations of the Tibetan *btsan po* may have been, in Sikkim we find the aligning of the Sikkimese royal family with Khri srong lde btsan, as understood by Tibetans of the *phyi dar*. This in essence legitimises the rule of the Sikkimese kings as similarly divine characters, which is reinforced through their association with Tibetan religio-political concepts as discussed in the introduction. It is perhaps unsurprising that the Sikkimese kings are also, like the Tibetan emperors, defined as Chos rgyal or *dharmarāja* the significance of which has been discussed above.

Whether Khri srong lde btsan acted as a Chos rgyal or not is irrelevant in our context; it is not so much that the btsan po was like that but rather that he is *believed* to have been like that. Such beliefs have been further reinforced through the *gter ma* tradition, especially in relation to *sbas yul* literature, where he often takes centre stage with Guru Rinpoche in prophetical dialogues regarding the nature of the hidden lands or in the discovery of manuscripts of which the authorship is attributed to him.[49] The 'truth' or 'authenticity' of these works may be dubious but, in essence, are irrelevant as they are *believed* to be 'true' and 'authentic'.

However, it has been noted above that there are narratives in which the Sikkimese royal family descended from Indrabodhi, the legendary Indian *dharmarāja*, whose descendants migrated to Khams mi nyag: does this, therefore, negate the premise of the narrative? The short answer to this is no, since this 'Indian' version serves the same purpose: i.e. associating the lineage of Sikkim with a figure of both religious and political importance. Furthermore, this appears to be a Sikkimese equivalent to the debate in Tibet surrounding the origins of the first Kings: descent from heaven vs. decent from India.[50] The ultimate rejection of the 'India' myth in Sikkimese narratives may have

[49] An example of such a dialogue can be found in numerous *gnas yig* to Sbas yul 'Bras mo ljongs such as the Byang gter text: *gnas 'bras mo rdzongs kyi gnas yig bzhugs s+Ho*. The 'prophetical' writings of Khri srong lde btsan make an appearance in *NGR* (see chapter 3) and in *LSG* he along with Guru Rinpoche and Santarakshita are involved in the sanctification of the *sbas yul* (see chapter 3 page 58).

[50] Karmay 2003: 196, discusses the evolution of the 'descent from India' motif in Tibetan origin narratives as being an 11th century phenomena, replacing the earlier myths of descent from heaven.

been for a number of reasons, most notable of which may have been the desire to associate the Sikkimese state 'historically' with Tibet and the Tibetan empire, rather than the 'holy' image of India as the seat of Buddhism, which was less relevant in the period the narratives were constructed as Buddhism had been replaced as the main religion by Hinduism and the Islamic rule of the Mughal dynasty. Furthermore, the 'invented' association of Khri srong lde btsan with the *sbas yul* tradition and the revelation of *gter ma* relevant to Sikkim may have taken primacy over an idealised view of India as the sacred land of Buddhism.[51] Whatever, the reasons for this choice, it remains apparent that the *telos* remains unchanged. Thus in the first narrative we discover a number of themes which serve to verify or prove and legitimise the arrival of Gyad 'bum bsags in Sikkim.

The first key point in this narrative are the significant religio-political ancestors of the Sikkimese kings, whether they be Indian (Indrabodhi) or Tibetan (Khri srong lde btsan). This identifies the main character, Gyad 'bum bsags, with a lineage of religious and political importance. After this has been suitably established, the narrative continues with an argument of justification, where religious themes, especially those associated with *gter ma* literature, become emphasised. Indeed the crown prince's first spiritual insight comes in the form of a vision of his tutelary deity, who directs him to leave Khams mi nyag for Sikkim in order to fulfil the prophecy of Guru Rinpoche. This theme is further echoed by his visit to the Jo khang and the miracles that occur there, and his visit to Sa skya when a prophetic letter falls from the sky, directing the Khams mi nyag prince to Sikkim in order to bring about benefit in the world. This is similar to the story of how the first Buddhist scriptures of Tibet fell on the roof of Lha tho tho ri's palace. It is at this time that we learn the reason for Gyad 'bum bsags strange name and the significant information regarding his spouse. Finally with the completion of this third supernatural event the prince and his sons go in search of Sikkim. Up to this point the narrative has been explaining the reasons why the Tibetans went in search of Sikkim, using religious motifs to explain their reasons and to highlight the point that

[51] In a number of *gter ma* texts Khri srong lde btsan and Padmasambhava appear in the imperial court. Khri srong lde btsan often asks questions of Padmasambhava regarding the degeneration of Buddhism or specific Buddhist teachings. Khri srong lde btsan also appears as the author or concealer of a number of treasure texts (see Gyatso 1993: 98 and *NGR* chapter 4 page 98).

the arrival in Sikkim was part of some predestined plan, the fruition of Guru Rinpoche's prophesies.

It is here that the narrative changes tack. Having answered why the Tibetans travelled to Sikkim, it is now the focus of the narrative to explain how this occurred. Furthermore, the narrative has to deal with the fact that the hidden land was already populated by a non-Tibetan people and thus present reasons why the Tibetans settled there. This is done through the story of Teg Kong Teg and Gyad 'bum bsags. The result of this was the Tibetan settlement in Sikkim and the symbolic unity of the Lepchas and Tibetans through a ritual blood pact at a place which can be identified to this day.

The second narrative makes use of similar devices, themes and sources of evidence to establish its primary goal: the establishment of the Sikkimese state. The first theme is the prophecy of *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*, which refers to the four individuals destined to open the *sbas yul* in Ratna gling pa's (1403–1479) *gter ma*. Then there is the fulfilment of this prophesy by the actions of the three Tibetan lamas and the coronation of the first Sikkimese king, who is a descendant of Gyad 'bum bsags and hence Khri srong lde btsan. This also confirms with another set of prophesies in which it is stated that a descendant of the Btsan po would rule Sikkim according to the rules of *lugs gnyis*.[52] The narrative points to the establishment of monasteries and the coronation throne as suitable evidence for the *telos* of the narrative. Further it discusses the nature of the internal administration and the establishment of borders, defining Sikkim as a nation state duly established.

Here then it is possible to identify the system of justification used by the narrators of the various narratives to prove their collective *telos*. The proof (*ra sprod*) thus follows this pattern: 1) religious inspiration, enforced by scriptural authority; 2) physical evidence, in the form of monasteries, coronation thrones, or suitable 'historical' sites; 3) direct witnesses, in the form of oral narratives passed down through generations and presumed to be infallible.[53] However, as we shall see in the following chapters these popular narratives do not merely 'emplot'

[52] For details of this literature see chapter 4 pages 95–96.

[53] This is stated thus in *NIT*: 10: *So in the absence of all authentic records relating clearly and authoritatively* [to] *the origin of the family of rulers of Sikkim, brief allusions found in the introduction or preface to the law book ascribed to the foremost Mahārāja of Sikkim, must be given credit to as they are moreover supported by the oral narratives of the oldest people living, who again ascribe their narrative to the annals of their parents whom they had heard relating so. BGR*: 22.

facts into a historical narrative, as Hayden White may argue;[54] in these accounts it is often the facts which have been sacrificed to maintain the integrity of the narrative and to adjust 'the events' to suit a worldview grounded in the religious traditions of Sikkim.

4.1. *Final Remarks*

This chapter has presented the two narratives of state formation and Tibeto-Sikkimese origins. The style, structure and the primary aims of the narratives have been discussed and analysed and a tentative theory regarding the subject and *telos* of the narratives has been introduced. The narratives have also been subject to a brief structural analysis, whereby the elements which define Sikkimese concepts of historical authority have been understood as a threefold 'methodology', which relies on scriptural authority, physical evidence and the oral traditions of 'direct' witnesses. Presumably if one or more of these three things are present the 'facts' are accepted. By extension of that, it becomes clear that the primary references for Sikkimese narratives are defined by tradition; i.e. by what is already known and understood to be true, and that these traditions are often defined by the religious, whether they be 'facts' established through *gter ma*, prophetical literature or 'authentic' religious authority.

The idea of religious authority in the literature of Sikkim is of paramount importance as not only do authors of historical literature make use of certain historical narratives but also understand these narratives according to accepted religious ideas. In Sikkim the *gter ma* tradition is the key source for this religious authority. Gyatso (1993) has noted the importance of religious authority, both on the part of the *gter ston* and his relevant spiritual attainments and the *gter ma* he is said to have revealed. In such cases the religious authority of a *gter ma* and a *gter ston* becomes more important than the historicity of the material and the 'presumed' historical period in which the *gter ma* was 'hidden'. The question then is not whether the Buddha actually preached this teaching or whether Padmasambhava (or some other figure from the past suitably imbued with 'Buddha-like' qualities) actually hid these materials, but rather questions of content and context; does the material conform to Buddhist philosophy, does the discoverer have suitable

[54] See the introduction of this book for further details of this debate.

spiritual attainments etc. As the legitimacy of the *gter ma* tradition is connected to the power of the individual who concealed the treasure in the first place as it is his prayers, prophesies and religious intentions that affect the discoverer (Gyatso 1993: 109). This is then portrayed as the fruition of the 'divine' provenance of the original concealer, in a similar way it is often stated that the 'seed' of the *gter ma* is placed in the mental continuum of the discoverer, in a previous life, which then bears fruit at the appropriate time for the discovery (Gyatso 1993). The acceptance of the *gter ma* tradition as authentic by Sikkimese writers thus adds this extra level of 'historical' authenticity to the facts they document. For example: the prophecy of *rnal 'byor mched bzhi* is considered as a 'true' historical account by fact of its religious authenticity as a *gter ma*. For Sikkimese writers the authenticity of this material is a given (i.e.: a *gter ma* states x + authenticity of the *gter ma* tradition= historical truth) and it seems implausible, to them, that the historical events could have happened in any other way.

Moreover, the facts are also grounded in other forms of 'tradition' such as the oral accounts of witnesses passed down through generations; and as they are considered as authentic sources they must be perceived as an 'unchanged' voice from the past. Similarly places which have been identified with 'historical' events are stated to be so, on account of their having always been regarded as such in the oral or written narratives that survived in the period the historical narratives were written down. By deduction, then, the idea behind the justification of a historical 'fact' is this: if something exists now and has a perceived history of transmission over generations, it must have always existed. In short: 'As it is now, so has it always been'. This is then superimposed upon the religious viewpoint, informed by the prophecies of certain *gter ma* materials; giving way to teleology, whereby the premise is also the proof. Such a view is obviously problematic for the study of history and is an unambiguous example of reading the present into the past. It also diminishes the role of change—whether it is social, political, religious or otherwise—through history, indeed it negates the possibility for change in the past by establishing the 'traditional' as an unchanging entity free from society, the past and history itself. With the projection of this idea the narrative also becomes imbued with authenticity as an extension of the religious tradition it uses to authenticate its facts, events and content. On account of this it becomes part of the local belief system, something which cannot be the subject of enquiry: an article of faith. Any criticism of this

'history' is a criticism of those who uphold it, and anything which casts even a shadow of doubt over the complete accuracy of this tradition becomes tantamount to a declaration that the believers or propagators of this history (not to mention religious tradition) are liars.[55] Something similar to this is clearly noted in *Gnas 'bras mo ljongs gi lam yig bzhugs s+ho*[56] where Guru Rinpoche declares that anyone who doubts the validity of this *gter ma* and its contents, regarding Sikkim as the supreme hidden land, denies the value and authenticity of his other teachings and shall be consigned to 'hell' for countless eons.[57]

The following chapter will discuss the historicity of the origin story, drawing on information contained within *LSG* and supplementing it with contextual evidence. In that chapter I will also begin to look at alternative events and 'facts' not present in popular historical narratives (as discussed above) and begin to raise questions on the reliability of 'tradition', whether that be religious, historical or religio-historical, as a valuable indicator of the past. Through an examination of *LSG* and evidence presented in that source we will begin to identify some similarities, and some differences with the narratives above, which indicate that the narrative traditions may have relied on earlier historical information, but that such a reliance was highly selective.[58]

[55] This is particularly pertinent in Sikkim where the historical narratives have taken on a political significance. In relation to current political debates surrounding caste reservations, historical traditions and narratives are used to identify the longevity of the Tibeto-Sikkimese (whether as an ancient ethnic group of Sikkim or on account of their former role as rulers) and by extension their right to be included in policies which give them political, social or economic benefits.

[56] I am grateful to Claire Schied for a copy of this text. In her Master's thesis she translates this document and comments on the nature of Sikkim as a *sbas yul*.

[57] *'dzam bu gling 'di na 'di nas lhag pa'i gnas gzhan med: 'di mi bden na ngas gsung pa'i chos thams cad mi bden pa'o: 'bras mo ljongs na de ltar yon tan yod: mi bden zer ba: skal pa dpag tu med pa dmyal ba nas thar ba'i 'dus med do* (folio 13a).

[58] This is noted in other Tibetan works like *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, in which Bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375) refers to a number of old sources but rejects them on account of their failure to correspond with doctrinal orthodoxy (Sørensen 1986). Furthermore in the opening prologue to the main text the author states clearly his reasons for compiling the historical work, namely: to propagate the history of the rise of Buddhism in Tibet.

CHAPTER THREE

JUSTIFYING 'STATE FORMATION': TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AND THE FORMATION OF LAW

In the previous chapter I introduced two key historical narratives regarding the ancestors of the Sikkimese royal family and their migration to Sikkim and the narrative of state formation. The focus for this chapter is a rare seventeenth century document, which provides a student of early Sikkimese history with a number of interesting insights into events, chronology and religious influence in seventeenth century Sikkim, and one which shares some similarities with those historical narratives presented in chapter one, but also presents a number of differences. Using information gathered from this source, this chapter sets forth a number of initial thoughts regarding the narratives of state formation and Tibeto-Sikkimese origins. This narrative of origin is important for a number of reasons, but most pertinent to the study of early Sikkim is the way in which this myth was used to legitimise the construction of early state apparatus and the expansion of territory. Alongside an account of this origin tale, the text refers to a number of hitherto unknown events and actors. Throughout the commentary, I attempt to locate these events and their actors within the chronology of early Sikkim.

This chapter also raises questions relevant to later chapters concerning the social and religious systems introduced into Sikkim. These systems include the adoption of the Tibetan religio-political theory of state and political power, as represented by *lugs gnyis*, a system based on the unification of the secular/political sphere with that of the religious/spiritual. Tibetan influence is not limited to the religious world, however, but is also identifiable through the introduction of economic practices such as land ownership, structures of taxation and a form of stratification based on the principles of Tibetan land economy.

1. La sogs rgyal rabs

This document *La sogs du 'brel ba'i rgyal rab* [sic](*LSG*) is also given the title *Mi nyag a'o sdong gi byung khung skye rgyu gnas 'dir 'tag tshul*

mon pa'i mtho [*sic*] *byang zin bris su bkod pa'o* and is actually a compilation of two documents. The first document (*LSG*) is the subject of this chapter; whereas the second document *Mon pa'i mtho byang* (*MTB*) is discussed in chapter five. *LSG* is six folios in length written in dbu med and was found in the private collection of T.D Densapa Barmiok A mthing. I am grateful to Yab Thinley Densapa (the son of Barmiok A mthing) for allowing me access to this document and to Tashi Tsering for providing me with a copy for consultation. A similar document (*PSLG*) was the subject of an earlier article (Mullard 2005), which was a copy of *LSG* compiled in 1972 by Gung rdo rje. That copy was part of another document, which was forty-five folios in length, and was actually a compilation of four separate documents written at different times[1] copied and compiled by Gung rdo rje into a single volume entitled: *Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs kyi gnas yig dang rgyal rabs mdor bsdus bzhugs so*.[2] The first document of this compilation (folios 2.a to 7.b line 1) was reproduced and translated under the title: *Steng phyogs lha nas babs te nang tshan* [*mtshan*] *rgya gar* [*kar*] *shar phyogs brgyud nas 'ongs* [*ong*] *te khams phyogs mi nyag a'o ldong drug spun gsum gyi byung khungs lo rgyus bzhugs so* (*PSLG*). Now that the original document has been made available I have reproduced a translation here (a copy of the Tibetan text can be found in appendix IV) as there are some substantial differences. These differences have prompted a revision of some of the ideas expressed in the earlier article (Mullard 2005a).

This document (*LSG*), written by Karma tshang pa'am bskal bzang blo ldan, gives a short overview of how Sikkim was settled by a Tibetan descendant of the Khams mi nyag royalty in alliance with a *mon po* (Lepcha) chief of *mon yul*.[3] From page five onwards the text provides

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[1] For details on the other documents contained within this compilation see the bibliography.

[2] 'A concise compilation of royal historical works and pilgrimage guide books to the hidden land of Sikkim'.

[3] The term *mon* is generally used to define non-Tibetan populations south of the Himalaya and around the borders of Tibet. However, it also conveys the derogatory meaning of 'barbarian' (see Pommaret 1999: 52–53 for a more detailed discussion of this term). Whereas the term *mon yul* usually denotes Bhutan, in this text the name applies to the land of *mon* (i.e. the land of the *mon* people). However, the use of *mon yul* in connection with 'Seng lding' (lding is a Sikkimese word for hill) could also refer to the hidden land of Seng ge ri in Lho brag (see Ehrhard 2003: 659–667, for details of the discovery of this sacred site). In this context, *mon* and associated terms are more likely to refer to the people that resided (and continue to reside) in Sikkim prior to the migration of the Tibetans, namely the Lepcha and Limbu. For details of the origins of the Lepcha see the introduction of this book.

details of how Tibeto-Sikkimese ascendancy was established—the battles fought, territories conquered, taxes levied and the laws introduced to govern the 'non-Tibetan' people (*mon pa*)—information which is conspicuously absent from later historical narratives such as *BGR*.

The colophon of the text provides us with important information about the possible connection of the author with the royal family. Accordingly, the location of the estate of Bkra shis dpal 'byor is identified as the place where *LSG* was written and, according to *BGR* (2003: 25), this is acknowledged to be the Palace of La sogs—the first residency of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. Provided the information in *BGR* is correct, which is by no means certain, the author Bskal bzang blo ldan may be considered to have had royal connections. This royal connection may be a relation of blood or one of marriage, for it is noted in the colophon that *LSG* was written in the house of the author's daughter. It is therefore probable that this text was written at the request of the royal family. Even if this is discovered not to be the case, the text is still vulnerable to bias in favour of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and his early reign. Bearing this caveat in mind, *LSG* enables a historian to gain at least a glimpse of the mechanisms and the ideas that influenced the 'state' at that time, if not a better understanding of the events that led to the establishment of the Sikkimese royal dynasty.

> (Cover page)The royal chronicle regarding La sogs
>
> (1) Herein is a record of the way in which [one] from the *a'o* sub-division of the *ldong* clan[4] of Khams mi nyag was [established] here and a manuscript compiled as notes of the Mon pa register.
>
> (2) Na mo *vajra* guru ratna ye! In the state of Enlightenment, which resulted from the accumulation of merit and wisdom during countless aeons, he generated the proper wish and intention; and in order to liberate all sentient beings of the world [he] arose from the throne in the divine palace of Dga' ldan (Tuṣita) heaven and by his all seeing power was born as the son of Suddhodana [who was like a] universal king (*cakravātin*) and remained in the equanimity of contemplation for twelve human years. After [achieving] perfect Buddhahood he

[4] In *PSLG*, this section reads *a'u* [also spelt *a'o* and *a bo*] *ldong drug*, which makes reference to the six proto-clans of Tibet. According to legend, these are said to descend from the children of the union between a monkey and a rock demon. These six proto-clans of Tibet are listed in Ramble 1997 (republished in McKay 2003: 70) as: *dbra, ldong, 'bru, lga, dpa'* and *mda'*. I am unsure whether *a'o* is a later division of the *ldong* proto-clan or whether *ldong* in this case is used to represent all six clans as suggested by *drug* following *ldong* in the Tibetan.

vanquished all evil and enemies of the *dharma* [lit. Heretics] and taught the eighty-four thousand approaches to the *dharma* in sixty melodious speeches. Praise to the crown jewels of all the protectors of the victorious teachings. Homage to Śākyamuni who has one eye for all sentient beings and is the most powerful throughout the three realms! Hail to the one who is the life-tree of all the teachings and living beings of the hidden lands, the self-emanated Mtsho skyes rdo rje (Guru Rinpoche) who emanated from the five light rays [of the wisdom of the five Buddhas], which mixed together in space and which arose from emptiness and awareness as the unification of the *vajra* and *bhagha* [of the *ḍākinī*].[5]

(3) Hail to the Auspicious Mañjuśri who is the holder of a sword and book, whose body is reddish-yellow in colour and is endowed with a crown [in which] his blue hair is tied in a topknot and who guides by means of the melodious voice of the dharma and various other qualities. I pay homage, without difference, to the three: Dharmakāya Amitābha in Sukhāvatī, Avalokiteśvara in Potala and the secret lord Vajrapaṇi in Akaniṣṭha. Seated on a lotus throne on my own head [is the one who is] the great essence of the secret teachings, is the most sublime root teacher and is endowed with the three types of kindness, who is the essence of all three Buddha bodies: Vajradhāra. Thus [I] request all auspicious deities such as the treasure holders, the gods of wealth, and the four guardian deities of the upper, middle and lower areas, the universal oath-bound dharma protectors (4) and especially Gangs chen mdzod lnga.[6] Here ends the salutation to the deities. Thus have the extensive prayers been completed.

Herein follows an account of the way in which the Buddhist teachings of the people from the lineage of *a'o ldong*, developed in the centre of this barbarian land of Sikkim. Miraculously, Śāntarakaṣita, Guru Rinpoche and Khri srong lde btsan set foot in this rice valley, the highest and most sacred of all hidden lands and from the same central throne of Brag dkar bkra shis sdings (also spelt Bkra shis lding) established without exception the fundamental nature of auspicious omens. [They also] prophesised the coming of the four yogin brothers [who are] emanations.[7]

It is said [in the prophecy] that a scion who has descended from Khams mi nyag of the *a'o ldong* clan, whose ancestors originated from

[5] This refers to the practice of sexual union which appears as part of the method of uniting wisdom *bhaga* 'vagina' and means *vajra* 'penis'. In the secret consecrations of the tantric disciple, the *bodhicitta* (thought of enlightenment), represented as the semen of the master, is accepted by the disciple. The above example alludes to the endowment of the disciple or tantric practitioner with the wisdom of the five celestial Buddhas during the process of consecration which is completed by the unification of the disciple with the essence of wisdom, through tantric sexual practices.

[6] For the importance of the Gang chen mdzod lnga cult among the different ethnic and religious groups in Sikkim, see Balikci (2002b).

[7] Namely, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, Lha btsun chen po, Mnga' bdag sems pa phun tshogs, Kaḥ: thog kun tu bzang po.

an eastern province of India and who in turn have divine origins [which were severed], will come and, being endowed with fortuitous Karma, rule this sacred land in accordance with the dual laws of religion and politics.

(5) From amongst the brothers [there was one] who by the power of [his] karmic connections and aspirations,[8] left from Khams and at the time of reaching Lhasa of the central province, he visited the sacred pilgrimage sites and gradually trod out the path. Upon arriving in Bra ma lung he took rest [for some time]. He reached Rgyal rtse via the region of Yar brog sgang and then gradually made his way to the road that leads to Phag ri. In Kham bu, he met and established the mchod yon relationship with Zhabs drung lha rigs. Gradually he ruled over these people of the *Gson dbang shi chog* clan.

From Gro ma khang chung,[9] which is the outer door of this place [i.e. Sikkim] the places of Chu mo gshong and Chu 'bir were gradually established. Despite residing in Chu 'bi for some time [they] were unable to increase their dominion.[10] It was then heard that in a place known as Mon yul seng lding there lived a Lepcha couple named Teg and Ngal who were capable of reconciling worldly affairs. So Gyad pa 'bum bsags, with all his servants, departed; and when he arrived [in that country] he met with a Lepcha.

(6) The Lepcha asked him the reason [he was there]. Gyad pa responded to the Lepcha's question [in the following way]: 'In the country of Seng lding there reside a couple called Teg and Ngal'. And he asked the way to their place. Upon hearing these words the Lepcha fled. However, Gyad pa pursued the Lepcha, and upon arriving near the Lepcha's house [Gyad realised] that he was none other than Teg himself. Once Teg had called him into the house he served him *chang* and made some enquiries to which Gyad responded: 'I am unable to increase my dominion and it is said that you know the auspicious means and methods of worldly affairs; and so the reason for coming here was to [ask your advice] regarding whatever methods are known for increasing [one's] dominion. Thus please will you perform whatever methods you know?' On hearing what Gyad had said, Teg promised to explain to him the remedy of father and son. Sometime after arriving back in his country, Jo mo gu ru became pregnant. Then, with haste, they departed for the sacred land [again]. Whilst on the way in a cave behind the pass [Jo mo gu ru] gave birth to a son. [Then they continued on their journey]

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[8] It is generally recognised that among the three brothers, who were considered chiefs of Khams mi nyag, only the middle one, Gyad, was prophesied to enter Sikkim (see *BGR* 2003: 11). However, in the various oral traditions of Sikkim we find the hero figure migrating to Dbus from Khams mi nyag with his father and three brothers, from whom the four major Sikkimese clans are said to be descended.

[9] Technically this means the small cottage of Gro ma, perhaps a misspelling for Gro mo.

[10] Namely, they were experiencing problems conceiving.

and arrived in the land of the Mon. The son was entrusted to Teg and he congratulated [the couple]. (7) Teg announced that the son [which was] born would have many descendants and he held a large feast [in their honour].

Also [at that time] the son was given the name of Brag btsan dar.[11] By the power of Teg and Gyad's karmic connections and by the power of auspicious karma both Teg and Gyad 'bum became friends. It was said that all the male descendants [of Teg and Gyad] would be considered as their own sons and whatever female descendants were arranged close to daughters.[12] With both their mutual consent, they resided in the country of Rong spogs[13] and the male line of their descendants increased without interruption. [In order] to prepare for the taking of a vow, where all male descendants [of Lepcha and Tibeto-Sikkimese] shall be inseparable, live wild animals were slaughtered. Many cattle, sheep and wild animals were butchered and their hides were spread out as seats. They then placed their feet in a tub of blood and ate the animal's intestines. The local deities, protector deities, and the *pho lha, gra lha* [*sic*: usually *dgra lha* or *sgra bla*], the five primary deities of Brag btsan dar's ancestral lineage were taken as witness and Teg made whatever *mon* gods existed bear witness. Furthermore, both the *mon pa*s took the great oath.

Thereafter Brag btsan dar gradually took control of the land (8) and some relatives from the clan of Teg were sent and on top of the peak of Zil gnon a town was established. Thus the way in which this sacred land was ruled, by the descendants of the clan of Mi nyag *a'o*, was in accordance with the prophecy made by the great master Guru Rinpoche.

During the seasonal offering of prayers[14] the lords were dispersed throughout the kingdom. Furthermore by certain means those, whether related to Teg or not, along with others were all assembled as subjects [to the king]. First of all those who were trustworthy servants amongst the Lepcha were considered as one's own sons.[15] However, when conflict or

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[11] Brag btsan dar is actually the collective term for the four main Sikkimese clans and hence makes up the first division of the *stong sde (sdus) ru(s) gshis 'babs mtshan brgyad*, i.e. the four clans and eight names (possibly sub-divisions of the four clans) of Sikkim.

[12] This passage probably means something on the lines of: 'whatever sons or daughters that were born to either lineage were considered by both the maternal and paternal line as being their own children/descendants'.

[13] Rong spogs is located at a distance of 3–4 kilometres from Kabi in north Sikkim and site of a number of caves.

[14] This most likely refers to the annual ceremony of prayers offered to the local protector deities in Sikkim. Traditionally all the people would go out to the plains and offer prayers. In later Sikkimese history this became formalised as the dpang lha gsol/spang lha gsol. The reason for the different spellings is that there is a dispute about the precise meaning of this ritual; some believe that it refers to the offering of prayers to those who bore witness to the original vow ceremony, whilst others believe that it refers to offering prayers in the meadows or plains etc.

[15] Presumably, all Lepcha were considered as the sons of the Tibeto-Sikkimese.

opposition gradually arose only the dependable and trustworthy servants and others would be given important work and they were placed under a head man and work leader. Thereafter the *mon* of the caste of Bkra shis steng kha[16] and the Lepchas of Seng lding were gradually subdued.[17] Thereafter they all were given the title of the 'Lepchas officials' (*las byed mon pa*).

Likewise, ministers who were unsuitable and untrustworthy, whoever they may have been, were known as the *mon pa* who conducted trade. There was the introduction of an official register on the produce of the autumnal harvest and (9) on the external servants who were obliged to act as porters and messengers and those involved in the production of goods[18] as well as a record of trade tax, which was accumulated continuously.[19]

Then as for the way in which the centre of this place was established it was in accordance with the prophecy of the four yogin brothers [who are] emanations. In the year of the water horse, 1642, Chos rgyal phun tshogs rnam rgyal arrived. Great festivities were made and the royal law was enacted. [In] this sacred land the great drum of the laws of the dual systems of religion and politics were proclaimed. [He] was established as the lord of all the divisions [of] religion and politics. Then regarding the ancestors of great kindness: such as Lha dbang bstan 'dzin and Lha dbang bkra shis.[20] From Sgang tog zil (g)non rtse they raised the land

[16] This section has been reproduced almost verbatim in the *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (2003: 36)*: de nas bkra shis sdeng kha'i mon rigs dang sing ldeng mon pa rnams rim bsdus kyis tshang mar las byed mon pa zhes ming btags/ thugs blos khel min gyi rigs la tshong skyel mon pa zhes phyi g.yog des skyel rkang 'gro dgos rigs dang / lag 'don/ bzo lum/ dbyar mjal dang / thog gsar sogs chad med sgrub rgyu'i tshong khral bkod bzhag mdzad pa'o//*. This has been translated in the English edition as: 'Gradually as the Lepchas of Tashi teng kha [sic] and Seng deng [sic] also came under the direct influence of the chief, they were called the ministerial Lepchas (Monpas). Those not so much in the chief's favour were employed as traders to carry goods and were called Tshong kyel Monpas, and employed in outdoor services. They were also expected to strike or kill anyone if necessary, in building and handicrafts. Besides they were to contribute the summer Nazar [tax] in the shape of newly gathered crops, grains and fruits and they were also to carry grains etc. to any markets for trade and barter' (1908: 15). Note the slight differences between the 1908 translation and the Tibetan republication.

[17] This either implies the growth and expansion of the areas of influence under the leadership of the Tibeto-Sikkimese or the subjugation of areas rebelling against Tibeto-Sikkimese dominance.

[18] Presumably goods such as handicrafts, utensils and equipment.

[19] This is probably the first and most important reference to the detailed administrative structures introduced in early Sikkim. In chapter six pages 153–158, I will discuss one of these documents, which details the population statistics of some areas of Sikkim.

[20] I have chosen to take this passage to refer to the ancestors of the author, rather than the ancestors of the Chos rgyal this is due to the fact that these two men were contemporaneous with Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and so were not his ancestors.

and since in the centre of this place auspicious circumstances could not be arranged, [they] first subdued the *mon pa* in Bkra shis 'dzoms [see figure 3.2]. The region was occupied and the *mon* were conquered. After residing there for some years they arrived in the centre of the hidden land. Upon reaching La sogs they met with the king and on account of being granted an audience [with the king] they were filled with happiness.[21]

In the year of the dog [1646] the castle of La sogs was built [see figure 3.1] and in this castle the crowned prince Bstan srung (10) rnam rgyal was born. In [1649] the year of the Ox [the palace] of Rab brtan rtse was established [see figures 3.3 and 3.4]. Yug mthing and Lha dbang bkra shis led the construction.[22] The land was occupied and the second auspicious event was arranged. Eventually by the strength of prayer some of the Lepchas of Yog bsam united with the servants that conducted trade. So those who were commissioned as messengers of the kingdom [were sent] to all the Lepcha communities of the upper lower and middle territories to assemble a council and [to designate the relationship] of servants and masters for as long as a hundred *kalpa*[s] without disturbance and after this council was assembled they were bound by a genuine oath. The [system] of the male and female lineages and individual property [rights] were explained.[23] If your mon pa is male you [will] obtain whatever sons there are. However, if your mon pa has only one male descendant that son must remain as the replacement father. Whatever daughters your Mnags mo[24] has, you will obtain [them]. But if

[21] The two people mentioned here, i.e. Lha dbang bkra shis and Lha dbang bstan 'dzin, were probably other Tibetan migrants that had settled in the area around Bkra shis 'dzoms in the past and had established a centre of local power in the region. The audience mentioned here may in fact describe a union between the areas controlled by Lha dbang bstan 'dzin and Bkra shis and Phun tshogs rnam rgyal.

[22] This passage is slightly misleading. In the translation I rendered it as Lha dbang bkra shis and Yug mthing led the construction presumably of Rab brtan rtse palace. Yug mthing is probably a personal name which is common amongst the Lepcha. There is no record of there ever been a place called Yug mthing. In Lepcha mthing is used to denote a leader or lord as in the case A mthing, used in later Sikkim as an honorific title for the highest rank of land-holders. It may well be the case that in the region under Yug mthing's control the throne (if we accept *khrid* as an error for *khri*) was built. In that case we can read Yug mthing as the Lord of Yug, namely Yug bsam [sic] or Yog bsam as it is also spelt. In which case the throne must be the throne in Nor bu sgang in the Yog bsam valley. This indicates that Yug mthing must have been subdued and brought under the control of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal at some point prior to 1649 (the date of the construction of the palace).

[23] Technically this could be read as *The male and female lineages and the individual property held under one were explained.* I have chosen to use the term property rights to indicate the legal nature of the following passages and in the use of this term, ones ownership of the property is implied (*rang 'og*).

[24] There seems to be a significant difference between the use of the term *mon pa* and *mnags mo*. In this example it appears as if these terms designate commoners and not high ranking members of society, indeed in this text *mon pa* seems to be used as a generic term for *mi ser*. *Mnags mo*, on the other hand seems to refer to a particular

there is only one daughter she must remain as the replacement mother. If the mon pa and the mnags mo have only one daughter they can obtain another [son]. This is what was actually decided. The lineages of lords and servants will remain forever like a flowing river.

(11) In order [to highlight] the benefits [of this system] it has thus been written clearly in this official source. Thus in the estate of Bkra shis dpal 'byor, in my own daughter's house, this document has been accurately prepared and compiled [based on what has been] seen by me Karma tshang pa'am skal bzang blo ldan on this exact date which is the auspicious day of the eighth month of the Fire Bird Year (1657), which is known in Tibetan from the *Collected Praise* as *gser 'phyang*.[25] And so may virtue prevail!

2. The Origins, Settlement and State Formation of Sikkim

The title identifies this source as *rgyal rabs*, which may be translated by a number of English terms (Royal annals, history, royal lineage, royal narration, history of kings etc.); however, I have chosen to use the term royal chronicle. In the introduction to this book I briefly discussed genre in Tibetan historical literature, and whilst it is often the case that examples of Tibetan historical literature fall in between genres, in this case it may prove more useful to identify this document by the definition of a chronicle presented by Hayden White (1981). Namely: a chronicle has a greater organisation of material than annals and superior 'narrative coherency', with a central theme or subject and uses chronology as its central 'organising principle'. It falls short of being a 'full' history on account of its failure to draw conclusions and to present a final 'end' that defines the narrative of events it contains. In short it 'lacks closure'; it fails to summarise and give meaning to the chain of events it documents (White, H. 1981: 15–16). If one accepts this definition of a chronicle *LSG* may be classed as a good, if brief, example of this genre of historical literature.

As will be shown below, the text has a central subject: the origins of the Sikkimese royal family and the formation of state. It also follows a chronological pattern, starting with events further in the past and ending with more recent events. It has a high degree of narrativity and

group of female *mi ser* and may well convey the meaning of an unmarried mother or may be a misspelling for *mna' ma*.

[25] The term given to the thirty-first year of the Tibetan cycle (*rab byung*).

conveys the impression that there is a point to the recounting of events it documents, but ultimately fails to give 'closure': it stops, somewhat abruptly, after recounting the final event. The author's attempts to give meaning by concluding that the events he recounts were witnessed by himself and that the final event was mentioned in the chronicle so that the benefits of the system could be highlighted. Whilst that is a conclusion of sorts, it fails to 'give meaning': to tell the reader what these events mean, why they are important or why the author has chosen to write them down. Ultimately this allows the historian to impart meaning to this text and speculate on the reasons for the composition, as the author does not clearly tell his readers: in short, he tells a story without an end.

The subject of the author's narration is also interesting, in that it is apparent that some of the elements of this account have influenced the later narratives of chapter two. The source begins with a truncated version of the Sikkimese origin myth presented in the first chapter. This story in *LSG* also differs in a few narrative details from later works such as *BGR*; these will be discussed below, along with a discussion of the historicity of the origin myth. *LSG* is also the first historical source from the seventeenth century which introduces the prophecy of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*, which may provide pivotal understanding to the nature of the religio-political order of seventeenth-century Sikkim. In this section of *LSG* the author presents a chronology and series of events and actors excluded in later narratives. These issues will form the focus of the section following the study of the Sikkimese origin myth.

2.1. *Myth as History: Some Remarks on the Origins and Settlement of the Tibeto-Sikkimese*

Following the eulogy to the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and local deities, the history begins in earnest from page five onwards. The account opens with a similar story of the migration of Tibetans to Sikkim, found in *BGR*, focusing on two major actors—Gyad and Teg—and their wives Jo mo Guru and Ngal respectively, and the son of Jo mo Guru and Gyad, Brag btsan dar. Brag btsan dar was conceived only after the intervention of Teg who used his healing and spiritual powers to aid the couple.[26] The story then continues with the oath of allegiance being

[26] This is the same motif found in the *BGR* account.

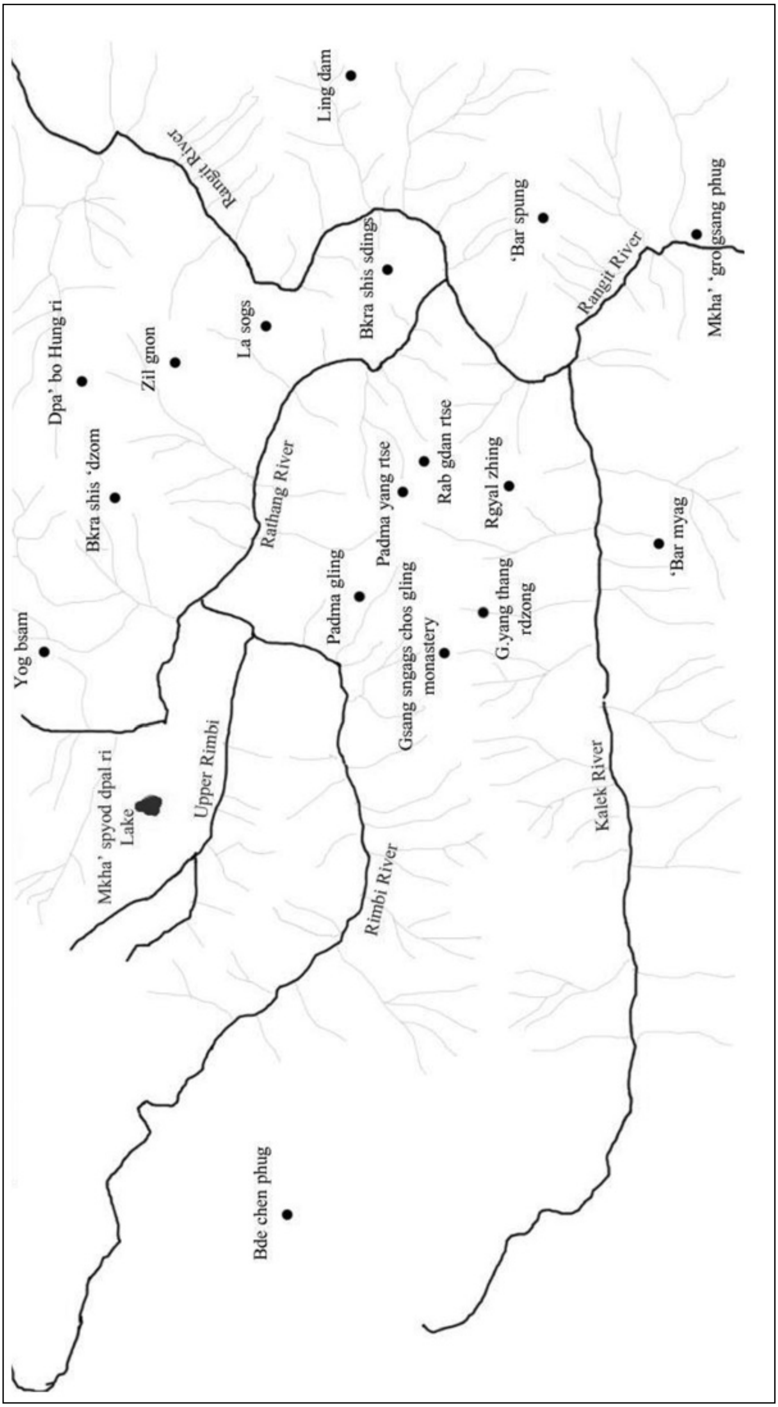


Figure 3.1 Sketch map of places in western Sikkim under the Rnam rgyal dynasty (c.1663).



Figure 3.2 La sogs rdzong.
The original rdzong was located on the flat land behind the main group of trees. Remains of walls can also be found to the right of the prayer flags and an old stone road runs through the wooded area. Photo by author.



Figure 3.3 Bkra shis 'dzoms monastery.
This was the region settled by Lha dbang bkra shis and Lha dbang bstan 'dzin during the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. The original rdzong has since been destroyed, though according to the Lepcha residents was located to the north of this monastery. Photo by author.

sworn by Teg and Gyad. This story can be divided into two sections: first, the migration; second, settlement in Sikkim.

2.1.1. *Origins and Migration*

The origin narratives discussed in chapter two suggests that the most possible line from which the Mi nyag kings descend is that of the middle son of Khri srong lde btsan, Mu rub btsan po. What is clear from those narratives, and not overtly stated in *LSG*, is that there is an attempt to associate the Sikkimese Kings with the lineage of the Tibetan emperors, through the common story of Mu rub btsan po and his exile from central Tibet. Whilst the exile of Mu rub btsan po was a historical certainty, the precise location of his exile is still far from being ascertained. Indeed many Tibetan historical writers, in the past, have generally adopted two approaches; (1) Mu rub btsan po was exiled to eastern Tibet or (2) he was banished to southern Tibet in the region of Lho brag or even Bhutan.[27] Such confusion regarding the location of exile for Mu rub btsan po suggests that one should not necessarily accept the 'Royal' origins for the Mi nyag kings and the Sikkimese royal family.

These origins are further confused when we look at both the historical record of the early Tibetan empire and oral and written traditions of regions geographically closer to Sikkim. The first point is that, according to Michael Aris (1979), Mu rub btsan po, known to Bhutanese by the name of Prince Gtsang ma, was actually buried in the Yar klung valley alongside other members of the Tibetan royal family and past emperors of Tibet. Haarh (1969) goes further stating that actually Mu rub btsan po was brought out of exile in order to rule Tibet during the minority of his younger brother. These statements alone may cast serious doubt over the authenticity of the relationship between the kings of Mi nyag and the royal dynasty of the Tibetan empire. If that is the case one may wonder how and why these royal origins were appended to the kings of Mi nyag and the Tibeto-Sikkimese.

As far as the first part of this question is concerned there are a number of possible sources which may indicate how the royal origins of the Mi nyag kings arose. The first and perhaps the most important source is the oral tradition of the Prince Gtsang ma epics found in Bhutan and popularised by the writings of Padma gling pa (1450–1521). The

[27] For details of these variations see Aris 1979.

popular story recounts that Dmar rgyan, wife of Khri srong lde btsan, did not receive matrimonial visits from her husband for a period of three years and driven by sexual desire copulated with both a dog and a goat. From these illicit and bestial encounters a son was born who had the mouth of a dog and the head of a goat, who was named Khyi kha ra thod on account of his inhuman appearance. Fearing repercussions, his mother kept him a secret for a period of nine years after which the Emperor discovered the boy and ordered him to Samye to receive recognition. However, when his father discovered his son's bestial appearance he banished him from the kingdom. The prince then made his way into Bhutan via the Chumbi valley where he settled.

The second set of sources for the story and exile of Mu rub btsan po can be found in the works of Dpa' bo gtsug lag and the fifth Dalai Lama who claim that Mu rub btsan po was exiled to eastern Tibet, where he ruled part of the border regions of Tibet (Aris 1979: 74). It may be possible to deduce, from these two sources of information, that the oral tradition as found in regions of Bhutan and the literary traditions of Mu rub btsan po's exile to Eastern Tibet may have been incorporated into the origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese. Claiming a royal ancestry is quite common amongst minor rulers on the Tibetan borderlands. Such a claim helps to not only solidify and justify the rulers' positions of power through an ancient royal lineage but also to further enhance their 'Tibetan credentials'. This point, which will be illustrated later, was an important issue in the development of later Sikkimese religious and political structures. The second and distinctly Sikkimese reason why the Btsan po's lineage was amplified in the origin stories of the Tibeto-Sikkimese rests within the religious prophetic literature of Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs, which emphasises that a descendant of Khri srong lde btsan will rule the Hidden land in accordance with the *lugs gnyis* legal system.[28]

It is not the lineage of Tibet's emperors that appears in *LSG*, but rather the story that the Mi nyag kings belonged to a lineage which descended from heaven and migrated from India into eastern Tibet. This brief reference is probably related to the mythic origins of the first Tibetan kings, which can be divided into two main narratives. The oldest narrative is that the first Tibetan king descended from heaven

[28] For further details of these two points see chapter two and four of this current work.

via a mountain to rule Tibet. The more recent story (11th century) is that the Tibetan kings had Indian origins. The reasons for the development of these two myths have already been the subject of a number of scholarly articles (Karmay 2003, Haarh 1969 abridged and republished 2003)[29] and so it is superfluous for me to discuss them here. What is important, however, is that it is clear that Sikkimese origin narratives have been influenced by these wider developments in Tibetan mythology to the extent that the Sikkimese kings are projected as both divine *lha ru* (born among the gods) and of Indian origin in *LSG*. Although it is not explicitly stated, by prefacing the text with themes from the mythical traditions of Tibet, the Sikkimese king (and by extension the dynasty) is depicted as an heir of royal and divine origin. The 'historical' *mythos* on which this is based is identified in later works (such as *BGR*) with the lineage narrative of Mu rub btsan po; which, as shown above, is of doubtful historicity.

Whilst it appears that the royal and divine origins of the Mi nyag kings may be in doubt some elements of the Sikkimese origin myth are more historically probable if not completely proven by primary source material. Indeed rather than a clear selection of primary references we are left with compelling circumstantial evidence for suggesting that the broad brush strokes of the Sikkimese origin myth may be viable enough to accept, in part, the story of Sikkimese migration.

Perhaps one of the most important references found in *LSG* is that of one of the ancient Tibetan proto-clans: the *ldong*, one of six major clans of Tibet. In *LSG* it is stated that the Sikkimese are descendants from Kham mi nyag *a'o ldong*. In *GoS* (1894: 7) *a'o ldong* (spelt Andong) is considered to be a toponym for a location between Sde dge and Dar rtse mdo. Balikci (2008: 66) correctly notes that there is no such place and instead forwards the possibility that the Tibeto-Sikkimese originally migrated from Mi nyag in Khams, located just to the west of modern Dar rtse mdo. Whilst this may be correct we are still left with the puzzling occurrence of the *a'o ldong* suffix in the title of *LSG*. Though technically the *a'o* is not a sub-division of the eighteen branches[30] of the *ldong* proto-clan, Gene Smith has noted that the *a'o* division is descended from Ldong chen po (2001: 320), who figures in

[29] These two articles appear in reprint in McKay 2003.
[30] The eighteen divisions of the *ldong* are given in Smith, G. 2001: 218: *cog, cog tse, tsog ro, 'brong, khyung po, zla la, 'bring, lha lung, lha rtse, brag, dgos pa, khu na, nya, tshe pong, lu nag, snying, pho gong, thag zang.*

Tamang histories as one Ldong chen po dpungs grags (Ramble 2003: 74–75), from whom eighteen sons descended, and this may be considered as a reference to the eighteen sub-divisions of the *ldong*. The position of the *a'o* in the organisation of the eighteen sub-divisions of the *ldong* has yet to be identified. The *a'o* prefix itself is untranslatable, and as such it leaves only the possibility for speculation. With that in mind it appears as if the *a'o* is a further sub-division of one of the principal families of the *ldong* group.[31]

There are a number of possibilities concerning the sub-division to which the *a'o* belongs, and these may be ascertained through an analysis of the Sikkimese origin story. The most pertinent theme in this story is the act of migration of the Khams mi nyag royalty, their arrival in Sa skya and their involvement in the construction of the Lha khang chen mo. The reasons for this are the parallels to be found with another more famous Mi nyag lineage: The rulers of Byang in Gtsang (of the *dar se* lineage), which are given only a short paragraph in *BGR*.[32] Balikci proposes an interesting although, as she admits herself, hypothetical account about the origins of Tibetan migrants to Sikkim. In this section, drawing mainly on the works of Stein (and *BGR*) relating to the possible migration of Tibetanized clans from Mi nyag (a part of the Tangut / Xi-Xia Kingdom) to Khams after the destruction of the Xi-Xia kingdom by the Mongolians in 1227, she argues that these migrations, caused by the role of the Mongols in reorganizing

[31] The similarities found in some of the origin myths of other 'Tibetan' groups of the southern Himalayas may provide some possible answers to the migration conundrum of the Tibeto-Sikkimese people. In the Sherpa history *Shar pa'i chos 'byung*, it is mentioned that the *ldong* clan migrated to Khams Mi nyag and after some time made their way to Khumbu in Nepal which is now the region most commonly associated with the Sherpa (Ramble 2003: 75). We have also noted above the connections with the *ldong* and the Tamang. Thus it appears highly unlikely that such similarities amongst 'Tibetanized' groups, which reside in relative proximity to each other, are merely coincidental. Indeed such similarities may indicate either a shared origin for these communities or a trans-Himalayan myth tradition originating through cultural and physical contact between these groups after their arrival in the southern Himalayan region.

[32] NIT: 10 reads: *But in a history by one Ye-shes Paljor, it is mentioned that rGyal-rgod's descendent was the Dar-seng* [sic. *Dar se*] *family who live in the northern portion of the Tsang province. These married with the Sakya family, and for some generations were known as the Sakya Pon-chen…But the Sehu dynasty should not and could not have been mixed up or dignified by divine prophecies, because they only descended from a malignant spirit, and not of the Bodhisatwic* [sic] *nature, nor is there any clear or connected narrative about their having come to Sikkim.*

the structures of thirteenth century Tibetan politics, could account for migration from Khams mi nyag to Sa skya (Balikci 2008: 66–69).

This argument is quite compelling when we examine the evidence. It has been noted by Ramble (2003: 72) that Mi nyag had existed as a political entity prior to the establishment of the Xi-Xia kingdom in 1032 and had survived the fall of the latter kingdom, but due to a break in the lineage, they migrated and became the rulers of the principality of Byang in Gtsang (Ramble 2003: 74–75). As Balikci (2008: 67) rightly notes this family intermarried with the 'Khon family of Sa skya and held the position of myriarch (*khri dpon*) during the period of Sa skya-Yuan rule in central Tibet (Petech 1991: 24–25). This family later allied itself with the former Sa skya dpon chen Kun dga' bzang po, responsible for completing the construction of the Lha khang chen mo in 1276, in his rebellion against the Sa skya authorities after the death of 'Phags pa in 1281 (Petech 1991: 24–25). The family suffered a further setback when the Byang khri dpon, Ye shes bzang po, was implicated in the murder of Byang chub rin chen, the successor of Kun dga' bzang po as the *dpon chen* (Petech 1991: 27). It may be possible that such events led to the flight of sections of this family to Sikkim, either to escape the political intrigues of central Tibet or on the direct order of the *dpon chen*. Indeed it has been often stated in the local historical traditions of Sikkim that the Khams mi nyag chief and his son Gyad 'bum bsags were sent to the southern border regions of Tibet to secure southern Tibet.[33]

In my readings of the *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, which has a chapter on the construction of the Lha khang chen mo of Sa skya, I have found no direct references to the involvement of ancestors of the Sikkimese royal family. Similarly *LSG*, the oldest version of the migration narrative, makes no mention of Gyad 'bum bsags ever visiting Sa skya, leaving the historian without an external event to date the Tibetan migration to Sikkim. This inability to identify the historical period to which this migration belongs leads one to conclude that there is not enough evidence to concur with the historical narratives of chapter one, in so far as they identify Tibetan migration to Sikkim with the construction of the Lha khang chen mo in Sa skya.[34]

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[33] This is implied in SMPd 79 referenced in Chapter two page 40 footnote 24.

[34] It should be noted that in a paper presented by Prof. Elliot Sperling at Gangtok in 2008, he notes a connection to Sa skya in another text *Mi-nyag A-'o Ldong-gi byung-khungs lo-rgyus-sam 'Bras-ljongs rgyalpo'i gdung-rabs byung-khungs*. In that it

The origins of the Sikkimese kings from Khams mi nyag have also been complicated by the recent work of Elliot Sperling. In a paper presented at the Gangtok conference of 2008, he argues that the assumption that all references to Mi nyag with regards to the ancestry of the Sikkimese kings are to Khams mi nyag may be convenient but ultimately would rely on the disposal of elements in the origin narrative relating to the Tangut state, that is Xi xia. He goes on to argue that when the Tangut state fell and people from that region migrated towards Khams mi nyag, their "historical memory, traditions and language integrated with the Miyao [Mi nyag people] already there" (Sperling [2008]: 9) to the extent that "the link to the Xi xia state became the common historical memory of the Mi nyag population" (ibid.) and that this may account for the amalgamation of both Tangut and Khams mi nyag elements in the origin narratives of the Sikkimese kings.

Whilst there is significant circumstantial evidence for the easterly migration of Tibetans to Sikkim, there is at present no direct evidence, contemporary with the migration process, linking the Sikkimese royal family with eastern Tibet. As a historian it is difficult to assume the accuracy of such an origin narrative, especially when there are a number of problems regarding the origins of the Sikkimese royalty and the association of this family with the rule of the Tibetan emperors. Whilst the repeated references of easterly migration and the use of nomenclature related to eastern Tibetan lineages (*ldong* for example) are puzzling, it is not enough to argue that something may be an historical truth because it is often repeated. Similarly, believing a local historical narrative without evidence to make an argument for its historicity is unsustainable. Whilst the context of Tibetological work on east-west migrations of Tibetans (Stein: 1951 and 1959) is well established, and this cannot be ignored, it is also contested (Ramble 2003: 74); it is possible that one may accept that the narrative of migration, or something similar, may be an historical probability, without direct evidence it ultimately remains speculative. This is particularly important when there is doubt over the association of proto-clan terminology with eastern Tibet. In addition in the same way that claims of ancestry from the Btsan po[s] of Tibet, is common in the legitimising aspect of new regimes in the Tibetan world, it may be possible (as

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is predicted that a descendent of Mi nyag would have as his "field of conversion" the hidden land.

Sperling suggested) that the claims of origin from the Tangut state played a similar function (Sperling [2008]: 12–13). However, the clan terminology of *Stong sde rus bzhi babs mtshan* [*tshan*] *brgyad* mentioned in chapter one, may help in answering, in part, the question of dating early Tibetan migration (generally) to Sikkim.

In Sikkim there are approximately thirty-four Tibeto-Sikkimese clans (for details see appendix II), which are divided on the basis of their relationship to the figure of the Sikkimese origin myth (Gyad 'bum sags), as well as subsequent migration patterns or social standing. The first division is the *Stong 'du'i* [sde] *ru*[s] *bzhi*, which is variously translated as *the four clans of one thousand* [each], or as this term was first translated by Kazi Dawa Samdup as *the four regiments of 1000 each* (NIT: 7 second section), but which could also be read as *the regiments of the four horns* or *the four clans of the General [which commands 1000 soldiers]*. As has been stated in chapter two, many of these terms (*stong sde, ru[s] bzhi* and even *tshan*) are of some antiquity and were used as administrative and geographical categories during the Tibetan empire. *Stong sde*, for example, can either mean the General in an army (the army was divided into regiments of 1000 soldiers) or as the administrative designation for 1000 households within a district. *Ru[s] bzhi* can have two separate meanings depending on whether there is a final *sa*. *Ru bzhi* refers to the division of ancient central Tibet into four horns (geographical and administrative regions), which has its origins in the period of the Tibetan empire. *Rus bzhi* means the four clans. It is difficult to determine what the precise spelling of this term was as it is possible that *stong 'du'i rus bzhi* was introduced as a way of contriving meaning from a term which had lost its original significance; it is also possible that *stong sde ru bzhi* was introduced as a spelling on account of its relationship to the Tibetan empire and thus served to add legitimacy to Sikkimese origins or it may be conceivable that the term does indeed have an Imperial origin. In addition to the above term the clans making up this first division are sometimes referred to as *Brag btsan dar pha spun gsum*. *Pha spun* is also a term of some antiquity and can be generally translated as *siblings from the same father; Brag btsan dar*[35] on the other hand is slightly more mysterious. *Brag btsan* is the term given to a class of deities that inhabit

[35] We have encountered *Brag btsan dar* in this chapter, where it is given as the name of Gyad 'bum sags son.

rocks and *dar* is a genealogical term. If we accept Brag btsan dar as the name of the Primogenitor of the Sikkimese royal family (as is implied in *LSG*) then we can read this phrase as *the three siblings [from the father] Brag btsan dar*. Accepting this, we are faced with a problem in the enumeration of the clans in this division of the clan structure in Sikkim; namely in the first instance we are told that there are four clans, yet in the second term it is implied that there are only three clans. To add to this confusion, and in typical Tibetan style, there are in fact six clans within this initial division of the *Stong sde ru[s] bzhi*. These six clans are:

1. Yul [m]thon pa
2. Gling gsar [sa, zad, zer etc.] pa
3. Zhang dar pa
4. Tshes bcu dar
5. Nyim [nyi ma] rgyal pa
6. Guru bkra shis pa

These clan names are quite interesting. The first two, apparently, refer to the migration process. The first can be translated as *Those who left the country*; the second name could refer to *Those of the new place* or could refer to a location in Tibet and could be read as *Those from the place Gling*, which has a connection with eastern Tibet. Clans three and four both include the term *dar,* which literarily means "spread" or "disseminate" but can also mean "flag" or "banner". It has also been noted as a genealogical term (*dar se*) for the rulers of Byang in Tibet, who claimed descent from Mi nyag. In the case of clan 3 *Zhang* has a number of meanings, such as maternal uncle, but it is also the name of a Tibetan clan, which may indicate that the Tibeto-Sikkimese of this clan may have been from the *Zhang* clan of Tibet. Clan 4 refers to the tenth day of the Tibetan lunar month, which is considered as an auspicious day and commemorates Guru Rinpoche. According to local tradition clans 5 and 6 derive from the name of the clans' primogenitor Nyi ma rgyal po and Guru bkra shis respectively. Below the division of the *Stong sde rus bzhi* is a group known collectively as the *Babs mtshan* [*tshan*] *brgyad* or *The eight names descended* or *the eight sub-units* and is often combined with the *Stong sde rus bzhi* in the term *stong sde rus bzhi babs mtshan brgyad*, though technically the *Babs mtshan* [*tshan*] *brgyad* are subsidiary clans of the *Stong sde rus bzhi* and according to local tradition are the clans of the followers of Gyad 'bum sags.

However, what is interesting in this second collective clan term is the use of the term *tshan*, if this is the correct reading than it may be possible to read the phrase in a different way. As early as 1982, Géza Uray had already linked the term *tshan* with the administration of the Tibetan Empire where he defined *tshan* as units consisting a hundred households (Uray 1982: 547–548) i.e. each *stong sde* consisted of ten *tshan*. However, Tsuguhito Takeuchi later argued that the *tshan* as a sub-division of the *stong sde* was actually a smaller unit of fifty households as each *tshan* had a 'right' and 'left' side, meaning that twenty *tshan* made up each of the *stong sde* and functioned as a basic unit through which taxes and obligatory services were levied (1994: 852–853). The term also is appended to other terms like *dar*, which seems to relate to military units. In later Sikkimese tax registers we find the word *babs*, which originally means to descend, as a term denoting the value of taxes received from a region by the Sikkimese state, which may indicate that a *babs tshan* may relate to taxation unit or region from which tax is received. Thus the phrase would read *the eight taxable units* or *the eight tshan [which] descends*. If this is indeed the case then, like *stong sde* we may be dealing with a phrase of some antiquity, indicating a group of people divided on the basis of their affiliation to one of the eight units (*tshan*) of fifty households. If *tshan/mtshan* can be read in the above way then the collective clan name may provide further evidence for associating early Tibeto-Sikkimese migrations to the period of the Tibetan Empire.

Whether the term is a remnant of the Tibetan Empire or not, locally the *Babs mtshan* [*tshan*] *brgyad* are the only other clans which are considered of pure descent; i.e. descent from the first migration into Sikkim under Gyad 'bum sags. The eight clans and their subdivisions of the *Babs mtshan brgyad* are:

A) Bon po:
   1. Bon po Nag ldig [sdig]
   2. Lha bsung
   3. Yos lcags
   4. Na bon
   5. Bon chung
B) Rgan stag bu tshogs
   1. Bon chung
C) Nam gtsang skor [sko] pa
D) Stag chung dar

E) Dkar tshogs pa
F) Grong stod pa
G) Btsun rgyal pa
H) Mdo khams pa

The first clan (A), which is sub-divided into a further five clans, is that of the Bon po. This is potentially very interesting when compared with some of the narratives for the origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese. Generally, as was noted in chapter one, the migration of Tibetans to Sikkim is regarded as a thirteenth century phenomena (based on the date for the establishment of the Lha khang chen mo in Sa skya). By that period Buddhism had become the dominant religion in Tibet, so much so, that the older Bon religion was itself going through a process of assimilation, and adopting elements of Buddhist philosophy. However, a brief analysis of the origin narrative of *LSG* reveals that Gyad 'bum sags and Teg kong teg (a Lepcha chief) took part in a ritual very similar to those described by Stein during the period of the Tibetan Empire (1972: 200).[36] This involved the sacrifice of animals and anointment in their blood as a means of swearing loyalty and fidelity between the Tibetans and the Lepcha; something which would be abhorrent to Buddhists. However, the practice of animal sacrifice continued in parts of northern Sikkim until 1959, where the relationship between early Tibetan religion and Buddhism was more blurred, with the first Buddhist institutions being built as late as the 18th and 19th centuries, than in western Sikkim (Balikci 2008: 83) which had been influenced by Buddhism in the fourteenth century.

Today, Sikkim still has a large Bon community, though most people from Bon clans have been Buddhist for a considerable time (possibly dating from the first Buddhist missionary efforts under Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can in the fourteenth century) or are Bon po of the new tradition (*gsar bon*). The existence of Bon clans in Sikkim poses a very interesting series of possibilities. In the first instance, given the similarities with rituals of some antiquity it may be possible to assume an earlier pattern of migration into Sikkim prior to the dominance of Buddhism in Tibet. This theory is not as wild as it may first appear. The proximity of temples in Bhutan associated with the taming of the demoness of

[36] As well as the use of animal blood during these oaths, Stein notes that the use of setting stones at the time of an oath is reported on the stele of 730 and the Dunhuang chronicles (Stein 1972: 200).

Tibet built during the period of the Tibetan empire,[37] indicate that the regions close to Sikkim were not unknown to Tibetans of that period. In addition during the period of the Tibetan empire parts of Nepal were incorporated and Imperial Tibet received Tribute from Harsha the Pala king of Bengal in 755 (Stein 1972: 60) and given the later importance of the Chumbi valley for trans-Himalayan trade it is conceivable that Tibetans may have passed through what is now Sikkim to Bengal. Therefore, it seems implausible that with Tibetans active in Bhutan and Nepal as well as trade relations with Bengal that Sikkim, which falls in between these areas, was not an area of Tibetan influence and possible migration. With the fall of the Tibetan empire in the ninth century, groups of Tibetan traders or military officials may have stayed in Sikkim avoiding the political chaos of Tibet. These Tibetans may have retained the ritual practices of that period in isolation from the rise of Buddhism in Tibet (which only came to Sikkim as late as the fourteenth century).

In addition to the evidence from clan names and contextual material mentioned above there is also linguistic evidence tying the Sikkimese language Lho skad with Old Tibetan. One of the primary sources of evidence is the continuation of certain phonemes in Lho skad which passed out of usage in Old Tibetan. Examples include (ma ya tags) mya as in the case 'Bar myag, ba ya tags bya as in the case of the verb byed or hen: Bya as well as the pronunciation of post-scripts (*rjes 'jug*). These phonemes along with grammatical structure and vocabulary are shared with Lho skad's closest neighbour Rdzong kha.[38] Indeed, these two languages are so close they are mutually intelligible by speakers of both languages. These linguistic similarities have been used as evidence by linguists like George van Driem to argue that the migration of Tibetans to Sikkim and Bhutan must have occurred around a similar time. It is generally held that Tibetan migration to Bhutan occurred at some point during the ninth century (Driem 1998: 84), it seems logical, therefore, to argue that Tibetans probably migrated to Sikkim around the same time if not earlier.

[37] Robert Miller (2003) discusses at length the relationship between the construction of these temples and the consolidation of the Tibetan empire. The Skyer chu lha khang was in fact built in a side valley of the Chumbi Valley.

[38] Nicolas Tournadre also pointed out to me that Lho skad is also similar to some southern Gtsang dialects, during his recent visit to Sikkim (in August 2010) to study the Sikkimese language.

So this linguistic evidence combined with the above analysis of clan names, Imperial-era rituals, and contextual evidence locating Bhutanese regions, bordering Sikkim, within the milieu of Imperial Tibet seems to suggest a connection between Sikkim and Tibet during the Imperial period. If this was the case then a number of questions must be raised regarding the authenticity of the Sikkimese migration narrative as discussed in chapter one and even to a certain extent the narrative found in *LSG* above. *LSG* is one of the oldest sources from Sikkim and as such it cannot be dismissed lightly, especially when part of the manuscript provides important information regarding the formation of the Sikkimese state. It has been noted above that the narrative contained within *LSG* does not contain references to the construction of the Lha khang chen mo in Sa skya (as compared with the later narratives as discussed in chapter one), indicating it may be possible that the migration from Khams mi nyag to Sikkim via central Tibet may have occurred earlier than the thirteenth century: as *LSG* only provides a narrative with no datable events. It may also be possible that this narrative only applies to the ancestors of the Sikkimese royal family and not the Tibeto-Sikkimese population as a whole and that narratives regarding subsequent migrations from Tibet to Sikkim were, at a later date, incorporated into the Gyad ʼbum sags narrative.

2.1.2. *Settlement*

The account of Tibetan settlement in Sikkim is interesting less for its historical validity and more for the way in which the two figures of Gyad ʼbum bsags and Teg kong teg are said to have united. First, a pattern of dual or parallel inheritance appears to have been established. Goldstein has noted this practice in Tibetan political and economic structures in which Tibetan *mi ser* were tied to their lord through the practice of parallel descent, i.e. sons were associated with their father's lord and daughters to their mother's lord (Goldstein 1971a: 1–27). In this particular passage it is not the relation between lords and tenants that is highlighted (although we do find this relationship in a latter passage of *LSG*, see pages 62–63 above), but rather it is part of the oath of friendship. In short, we witness the unification of two separate families into a single relation or kinship network. This coming together of two distinct families closely resembles the unification which takes place during marriage.

In Lepcha marriage customs the marriage does not symbolise the union of two individuals but signifies a contract between two kin

groups. It is common for this contract to be maintained even after the death of the husband. Gorer noted that it was common for the wife of the deceased man to be re-married to another man from the same kin group, but that she cannot be re-married to a brother of the deceased husband if that brother has married a sibling of the widow (1996: 156–163). The reason for this is that both women share the same mother, and thus the brother is already connected to the mother through marriage to the widow's sibling. It has been suggested by Sardar-Afkhami (2001: 142) that this event (as well as the fact that Gyad and his wife were having problems conceiving) marks the offering of a Lepcha wife to Gyad. Although there is no direct evidence for Sardar-Afkhami's interpretation of this narrative, it seems likely, or at the very least, a historical possibility as certainly some form of alliance took place. This alliance, which would have been of crucial importance to the early Tibetan settlers, was further strengthened through a series of oaths and animal sacrifices, similar to those that took place in the period of the Tibetan empire. Stein (1972: 199–201) notes that during the swearing of treaties and oaths during that period, Buddhist and local deities such as *dgra lha* and *klu* were taken as witnesses and that the participants anointed themselves with the blood of sacrificed animals.[39]

The result of this union (whether it was one of marriage or otherwise) was the settlement of Sikkim by Tibetans and their ascendancy over the indigenous Lepcha population. Brag btsan dar gradually takes control of the region and despatches a group of Lepchas to Zil gnon, where they establish a settlement, this is stated in *LSG* as the fruition of Guru Rinpoche's prophesy regarding the establishment of the rule of the *sbas yul* by members of the *a'o* division of the *ldong* of Khams mi nyag. The kingdom then grows and all the people, whether descendants of Teg kong teg or not become subjects.

Like the first section of this narrative, regarding the origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese, this section is also lacking direct historical proof. The local inhabitants of Sikkim often point to the site of Kabi Longchok, in Northern Sikkim, as the place where Gyad 'bum bsags and Teg kong teg

[39] Whilst these similarities may be significant it is important to remain cautious regarding the possible interpretation of these rituals as a pre-Buddhist Tibetan practice. It is also possible that these practices may have formed part of a Lepcha ritual cycle that may have sanctified the union between the families of Gyad 'bum bsags and Teg kong teg.

carried out the unification ritual. In chapter two it was shown how the method for asserting a historical 'fact' was used: namely that for something to be accepted it required three forms of evidence, one of which was some form of physical remain. The site of Kabi Longchok and some of the caves (in which certain stone structures have been erected) in that region are of particular interest. However, without archaeological surveys of these sites it seems unlikely that evidence will be forthcoming. This need is further encumbered by the efforts of the Sikkimese government to make this, and a number of other historical sites, suitable for attracting tourists; an effort which may lead to the destruction of significant evidence which may have contributed to the formation of an archaeological record for Sikkim. Another problem is that this site is in constant use by locals who make offerings and place stones around the site and these practices, combined with the annual growth of the Sikkimese jungles, often makes sites appear older than they actually are. Whether such things have contributed to an 'invention' of this location as a 'traditional' or 'historic' site is not easily identifiable; in other regions of north Sikkim teams of archaeologists have unearthed a number of artefacts of the Neolithic period and the use of stones by the Lepchas to signify religious sites should also be remembered.

The historicity of this and the origin narrative in *LSG* is not of crucial importance, but the belief in it is. What the author of *LSG* is attempting to illustrate through the documentation of this narrative is the projection of the rule of the Tibeto-Sikkimese into the past. Furthermore, it sets forth a number of justifications for this rule, which take the form of religious explanations, through references to prophetical traditions and political rationalization, through the unity ritual of Gyad 'bum bsags and Teg kong teg. This ritual is a key point as it transforms Tibetan settlers from potential colonisers to 'blood brothers' anointed through their unity with the indigenous Lepcha population, witnessed by both the gods of the Tibetans (*pho lha, dgra lha, yul lha* etc.) and the Lepchas (*mon lha*). The preface to this ritual is also of importance: *pho rigs rtsam lcong can kun bu nyes zer/ mo rigs gang yin bu mo'i nye ba bzhag/*, as this indicates that the Lepchas and Tibetans became a single group and so if Tibetan ascendancy was to arise, it could not be construed as a Tibetan hierarchy dominating a subservient ethnic group. In other words it associates Tibetan rule as one branch of a kinship network ruling over another branch of the same kinship group. As we shall see in the next sections of this chapter and in later chapters, this was not widely accepted.

3. State and Politics: Some Previously Unknown Events

According to the narratives of state formation in chapter two, the reader is given the impression that prior to the arrival of Lha btsun chen po, Sikkim was without major political states. Indeed they claim that Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was little more than a farmer from Gangtok in eastern Sikkim, who was found by Lha btsun chen po's followers and brought to west Sikkim to rule the state in accordance with the religious prophecies.

From pages 8–10 of *LSG* we learn that a basic system of social, political and economic organisation was introduced prior to Phun tshogs rnam rgyal ascending the throne in 1642.[40] First, according to *LSG* there was the division of the population into two groups: *g.yog* (servants) and *blon* (ministers). The servants were organised into various groups under higher ranking officials known as *mgo chings* and *las dpon* (headman and work leader) and the Lepchas of Bkra shis steng kha and Seng lding were given the title of Lepcha officials (*las byed mon pa*) after their incorporation into the territory of early Sikkim. The ministerial group was organised according to their reliability and trustworthiness. Those who were not trusted became involved with trade or were responsible for tax collection.

This passage has been reproduced verbatim in *BGR* (2003: 36) and does precede the arrival of Lha btsun chen po in the chronology of that text; however, the evidence of this passage is ignored in the later narration of events surrounding the establishment of the Rnam rgyal dynasty. Yet it seems important enough for the author of *LSG* to include it as a key introduction to the following passage regarding the religio-political organisation of Sikkim. Indeed the fact that *LSG* indicates that the early formation of authority existed, through basic state organisation and a taxation system, prior to 1642, leads one to believe that either Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was not necessarily the first ruler in Sikkim (he may have inherited this position from an earlier figure, about whom we know almost nothing) or his rule pre-dates 1642. Furthermore, it begs the question: if there existed some form of 'state-like' structures prior to the arrival of Tibetan Lamas in Sikkim,

[40] This date is still problematic: see chapters 4 and 5 for a detailed discussion of this event.

why is the 'formation' of the Sikkimese state in 1642 such a definitive point of reference in later historical narratives and is it possible to form a state which already exists? Whatever the answer to that question may be it is hard to imagine that a 'state', 'country', or 'political-territorial entity', of any form, would appear over night. It would be more logical to assume that the birth of a territorial domain, in which there are certain political and organisational structures, was the result of a gradual process of development.

Indeed it appears that prior to 1642, in the western regions of Sikkim a political domain grew and expanded with areas such as Bkra shis ldeng kha and Seng lding (page 60 above) gradually coming under the control of that territory which Phun tshogs rnam rgyal would rule, and, in alliance with minor rulers, expand. On pages 8–9 of *LSG* (pages 60–61 above) we are told of an interesting event relating to a united group of Tibetan migrants, Lha dbang bstan 'dzin and Lha dbang bkra shis, who attempted to settle in Zil gnon only to find that this area was not suitable, probably because it had already been occupied or there was a high level of local resistance (described in *LSG* as an inability to establish 'auspicious circumstances')[41] and so settled or subdued the Lepchas in Bkra shis 'dzoms, where they carved out a proto-state.[42] They ruled this territory "for some years" until Phun tshogs rnam rgyal appears to have co-opted Bkra shis 'dzoms into his realm probably through an alliance, described in *LSG* as a royal audience. Later on in the same text we learn that the same Lha dbang bkra shis[43] expanded the territory under the administration of Phun tshogs and with Yug mthing built Rab brtan rtse.[44] Thus it seems likely that the early reign of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was defined by the expansion

[41] *LSG* (page 9).

[42] The term 'proto-state' has been used here to illustrate the pattern of seventeenth century political geography in the region to the west of the Tista river. It is highly probable that in this region there existed a pattern of small independent territories under the administration of both Lepcha and Tibetan clan leaders. Gradually, these territories or 'proto-states', fell under the control of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. These may have been similar to the way in which the Kiranti areas of eastern Nepal were annexed during the Gorkha expansion.

[43] Lha dbang bkra shis appears to have been a highly influential person in the politics of early Sikkim. He is frequently mentioned in *LTLY* by the title *jo bo* (folios 607 to 608), which is generally associated with lay people of considerable importance and can be roughly translated as 'lord' or 'master'.

[44] It is likely that Yug mthing relates to a Lepcha leader. Mthing in Lepcha corresponds closely with the Tibetan terms *rgyal po* and *sa skyong*.



Figure 3.4 The ruins of Rab brtan rtse palace from the old Padma yang rtse road. Photo by author.



Figure 3.5 The main royal assembly hall of Rab brtan rtse Palace (which is located in figure 3.3 above on the far left hand part of the photo behind the tall trees). Photo by author.

of the borders of his territory through the subjugation of other smaller Tibetan and Lepcha territories using, in some instances, military strength and in others subservient alliances.[45]

[45] See chapter 6 for further discussions of this possibility.

3.1. *Rebellion and Reorganisation: Stratification in Early Sikkim*

Despite establishing himself as the dominant power in Sikkim at some point after the establishment of Rab brtan rtse Palace in 1649 (see figures 3.4 and 3.5 above), there was a rebellion against the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal instigated by the *mon pa* of Yug bsam and what *LSG* describes as *Tshong skyel mon pa*, which refers to a group within the economic stratification of early Sikkim. This rebellion seems to have been subdued by 'royal messengers', who were dispatched to the *mon pa* strongholds throughout the kingdom and who, after the rebellion was pacified, established a royal council to 'mediate' and enact some form of agreement. The result of the council was the introduction of a law which defined the relationship between *dpon* and *g.yog*: i.e. the two classes of lords and servants, which probably relate closely to the terms *sger pa* and *mi ser* noted in Goldstein (1971: 522). This law reads as follows: "If your *Mon pa* (i.e. a *Mon pa* under your administrative authority) is male, his sons will belong to you (i.e. they will belong to you as servants).[46] If the male *Mon pa* has only one son he will be retained by his family. Your wife will obtain whatever female *Mon pa* descendants that may exist, but if there is only one, she will be retained by the *Mon pa* family. Whatever daughters your Mnags mo has, you will obtain [them]. But if there is only one daughter she must remain as the replacement mother. If the mon pa and the mnags mo have only one daughter they can obtain another [son]."

The law uses the language of generalised Tibetan kinship and social customs regarding inheritance and property ownership. As noted in an earlier passage of this document, in which the female descendants of Gyad 'bum bsags are associated with the lineage of Teg perhaps on account of a marriage alliance, the possession of 'servants' is aligned with gender. It should be noted that the dual ownership of both male and female 'servants', which implies the total ownership of all the descendants of a family grouping and this family's responsibilities to their overlord, may be a mechanism of controlling marriage external

[46] While this section of the text makes repeated reference to *mon* (Lepcha) and *g.yog* (servant or one who provides services), it may be more accurate to designate this economic group as landed tenants. Such an economic system has been widely noted in other regions of the Tibetan area, in which tenants provide domestic and other services, along with a portion of their harvest, as a form of tax to the 'Lord' or 'true' owner of the estate on which they are engaged in exchange for rights over land (see Goldstein 1971c and 1973).

to the (e)state or region of domicile.[47] It is also interesting to note the application of Tibetan concepts of gender division to the 'ownership' of *Mon pa* and perhaps other tenants, with *mon* in this context being used, perhaps, to discuss *g.yog* generally. Whether the use of a kinship or inheritance metaphor represents an attempt to introduce a law of servitude on the basis of ethnicity, through the association of Tibetan concepts of land economy is still open to speculation providing the reading of *mon* in this context is loosely defined.

The fact that this passage begins with the statement that the council was established 'to designate the relationship between servants and masters' (*dpon g.yog*)[48] and the grammatical use of the genitive particle suggest a level of ownership or possession. Note the difference in meaning between *rang gi mon pa pho yin na* and *rang mon pa pho yin na*. The former, which is found in *LSG*, reads as: 'if the *mon* which belongs to / associated with you are male' or more literally 'if your *mon* is male', whereas the latter would read something like: 'If you yourself are a male *mon*'. The use of the genitive particle in this case thus changes the meaning of the whole passage. Furthermore, if the passage had merely stated the Tibetan system of kinship practices, the whole passage would need to be 'corrected'. If this was a rule only relating to the Lepchas kin practices, there would be no need to state 'in the case of there being only one son he should be retained as "*pha tshab*"' as this is implied by the earlier statement, providing that the genitive particle in the opening phrase if removed: 'if you are a male *Mon pa* you will receive whatever sons exist'. If the phrase is read as simply representing general Tibetan kinship practices, we are left with a rather confusing passage requiring the omission of a number of key grammatical particles. While far from conclusive, this passage may prove to be important for understanding the introduction of Tibetan land economy marked by the social distinction between land owners (*dpon*) and *Mon pa* tenants/ servants (*g.yog*).

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47 For details of this and similar concepts see Goldstein 1971c and 1973.

48 While the term *dpon g.yog* literally designates the relationship between servants and lords, such terminology can also be applied to the relationship between a disciple and his guru or even between two males of the same family group, e.g. father and son, or paternal uncle and nephew. For a more detailed analysis of this see Stein (1972: 94–109).

This section of *LSG* seems to suggest that during the reign of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, a system of ethnic stratification[49] was introduced into Sikkim based on the application of Tibetan land economy. While this document does point to such a conclusion, it should not be taken as a final point of analysis for early Sikkimese ethnic and economic relations. Indeed, the lack of consistent information regarding this period of Sikkimese history, coupled with the inherent bias of *LSG* and some doubt caused by the errors inherent in the text call for caution in analysing such a provocative account of economic, social and ethnic relations. This is further highlighted by the earlier reading of the origin and settlement narrative of *LSG*, where there is the marked use of the unity ritual to illustrate parity between Lepcha and Tibetan groups.

4. Some Concluding Remarks

In *LSG* the earliest known narrative of Sikkimese origins and state formation are presented and the author of this chronicle makes similar use of certain motifs found in the later narratives (see pp. 36–46 above). These include references to the prophetical traditions regarding the migration of Tibetans to Sikkim and the establishment of the Sikkimese state in accordance with the tradition of *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*. However, unlike the later narratives it fails to present a detailed account of the formation of state and the role of the three Tibetan lamas. The main foci of the author are the expansion of territory in Bkra shis 'dzoms and the introduction of a Tibetan influenced legal structure, which is retrospectively justified through the initial narrative of origins and settlement.

Thus *LSG* raises a number of important questions regarding not only the formation of political structures and religious authority, but also the importance of historical legitimacy (the lineage history of the Sikkimese Chos rgyal) and the chronology of events in the forming

[49] Providing we read *mon* as non-Tibeto-Sikkimese. The use of *mon* to define the ethnicity of Teg in the earlier passages of this text indicates that *mon* does refer to the Lepcha in that instance. It is still problematic, however, to assume that the term *mon* directly refers only to Lepcha people. In the second text of this work (see chapter six) the use of the term *mon pa* to Limbu groups as well as Lepcha indicates that the term *mon* had yet to become a distinct ethnonym for the Lepcha. Although by 1663 the term was used in a way that specifically related to the Lepcha (see chapter 6, pages 140–143).

state. Such questions, which at first appear similar to orthodox historical accounts of Sikkim (such as *BGR*), actually suggest a more complicated historical process of state and religious formation, involving events, locales and figures which have yet to find their place within the orthodox historiography of Sikkim. *LSG* also documents early Sikkim as being characterised by the gradual expansion of territory and the development of certain political or legal structures. Therefore giving a more gradual feel to the 'formation' of early Sikkim, than later narratives which tend to define the formation of Sikkim as an immediate affair lacking any references to conflict resulting from the creation of a new political system. *LSG* acknowledges that there was conflict (even if indirectly) and that the establishment of the royal dynasty involved the subjugation and occupation of new territory. Following the rebellion against Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's rule new legal structures were established.

The introduction of this legal code, demarcating the role and position of *dpon* (lords/masters) and *g.yog* (servants), based on wider Tibetan concepts of parallel descent, may indicate a substantial shift in the organisation of Sikkimese society from minor chiefdoms to a 'proto-state' based on a Tibetan model of political hierarchy. It remains unclear whether the system of stratification applied only to the non-Tibeto-Sikkimese communities such as the Lepcha (and possibly the Limbu), or whether the system was applied more generally to all ethnic populations (or at least the non Tibeto-Sikkimese population) in Sikkim. Resolving this question is crucial for an understanding of whether the immediate subordinates of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal[50] were drawn from various ethnic communities, or whether the early Sikkimese state was characterised by the rule of a Tibeto-Sikkimese hierarchy over the Lepcha and Limbu populations, and Tibeto-Sikkimese commoners.

These questions will be revisited in chapter six along with other issues regarding political structures and the territorial borders of early Sikkim. The following two chapters will be concerned with the problem of dating the coronation of the first Sikkimese king and the nature of religious patronage in this early period. Chapter four will look at the

[50] By this I mean those figures who held posts of high rank, as *LSG* mentions that some minor officials were drawn from the ranks of the Lepcha, and possibly the Limbu, populations (*las byed mon pa*, etc.).

role of Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin, one of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi* of later narratives, and compare that with the way in which he is depicted in the later narratives. That chapter will also begin to introduce an alternative approach towards understanding religious patronage in Sikkim, an issue which will be continued in chapter five (focusing on the role of Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med). These chapters will show that there are still a number of contradictions between seventeenth century source material and the later narratives of Sikkim and begin to introduce a number of possibilities for these inconsistencies.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN EARLY SIKKIM: THE CASE OF MNGA' BDAG PHUN TSHOGS RIG 'DZIN

In the previous chapter the settlement of Tibetans in Sikkim and formation of the early Sikkimese state were examined and it was shown that there are a number of significant problems inherent in the traditional narratives as described in chapter two. Although in *LSG* there were references to the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*[1] and the prophetical tradition surrounding Guru Rinpoche, the source in question also detailed events which are lacking in later sources. This illustrates a more complex story of gradual expansion and conflict, which ultimately led to the formation of the Sikkimese state.

In this and the following chapter, the focus of the argument will be directed towards an examination of the role of two religious figures in the formation of Sikkimese religious structures and the organisation of state sponsored religious patronage.[2] In this chapter, specifically, the life and activities of one of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi* (Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin) will be examined. This chapter will then conclude with a description of the role of the Mnga' bdag family in early Sikkim, which, in the following chapter, will be compared with the role of one of the other principal 'architects' of early Sikkimese religion and state: Lha btsun chen po nam mkha' 'jigs med. In accordance with the traditional and orthodox accounts of the formation of the Sikkimese state, Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin, one of the chief protagonists in the text below, plays only a sideline role in the coronation of the first Sikkimese Chos rgyal, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, and the subsequent construction of Buddhist institutions (for examples see chapter two). This text is particularly interesting in that the role of this figure

[1] The four figures responsible for the opening of the hidden land and state formation of Sikkim according to local narratives.

[2] Chapters 4 and 5 have been heavily influenced by the work of Lha tshe ring (2002), a local Sikkimese historian who has begun the process of re-examining the religious history of Sikkim. His work on the Mnga' bdag lineage in Sikkim prompted my own work on the analysis of Sikkimese historical narratives.

of early Sikkimese history is highlighted in a way that is uncommon in other later (post 1700s) historical works.

1. The Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs

The text used below (*Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs*) is taken from the Gnam rtse (monastery) edition[3] of the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (hereafter *Glr*), written in the fourteenth century by the Sa skya hierarch Bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375). The section which interests the student of early Sikkimese history is, however, a later appendage to the famous historical account of the early Tibetan emperors and their lines of descent (hereafter referred to as *NGR*). *NGR* was written in the mid seventeenth century and replaces the chapter in *Glr* on the royal descendants of Ya rtse. Taking the construction of the golden roof above the image of Avalokiteśvara, by Dpal ldan grags pa, as its point of departure, the text begins to chart the lineage of the rulers of Mar yul and their descendants in Sikkim.

The location of Gnam rtse monastery is important in later Sikkimese history as the original site of Gnam rtse rdzong (the *rdzong* was converted into a monastery in 1836) which was the residence of Phan bde dbang mo (see figure 7.2 on page 169). Phan bde dbang mo was the half-sister of the third Chos rgyal, Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, from the second King's Bhutanese wife (see diagram on the Rnam rgyal dynasty p. xii). She had an affair with the son (Mnga' bdag rin chen mgon) of the author of *NGR*, and is accredited with starting the War of Succession and the subsequent Bhutanese involvement in that war. She is characterised in later Sikkimese history as a usurper to the Sikkimese throne, though in all likelihood she was probably used as a figurehead for a Bhutanese faction in the Sikkimese royal court. The War of Succession and the Bhutanese invasion of Sikkim, amongst other histori-

[3] The text is called the Gnam rtse edition on account of it being discovered in the Byang gter (Mnga' bdag) monastery in the place of the same name. According to the remains of the colophon it appears as if there were a number of copies in circulation, one of which was housed in the Byams pa lha khang of the monastic complex of Brag dkar bkra shis sdings, the principal seat of the Mnga' bdag family and religious tradition in Sikkim. The text in question can be found in two versions; first an *dbu can* edition, which was subsequently microfilmed and published in 1985 by Sherab Gyaltsan Lama *et al.*; the second edition is a *'khyug* copy of this text in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology collections. The original manuscript still survives in Gnam rtse.

cal events in Tibet, are fundamental to understanding later Sikkimese historical writings and will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.

Unfortunately *NGR* is incomplete and has suffered considerable damage from a combination of general usage and the voracious appetite of certain Himalayan insects. Indeed the text is missing a portion of the colophon and throughout the text lacunae and errata are commonplace. Such things have transformed a reasonably straightforward text into an often puzzling and at times difficult, if not completely misleading, account of the Mar yul rulers and their descendants' activities in Sikkim. Fortunately, however, there is a heavily edited and summarised account of the contents of this manuscript to be found in the third chapter of Mkhan po lha tshe ring's book *Mkha' spyod 'bras mo ljongs kyi gtsug nor sprul pa'i rnal 'byor mched bzhi brgyud 'dzin dang bcas pa'i byung ba brjod pa blo gsar gzhon nu'i dga' ston*.[4]

The author of *NGR* is generally recognised as one Byams pa bstan 'dzin, son of one of the three lamas' (plus Phun tshogs rnam rgyal making the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*) accredited with the coronation of the first Sikkimese king.[5] The puzzling section in the text that refers to this is written in the honorific: *mtshan chos kyi rgyal po byams pa bstan 'dzin zhes gsol ba*[*s*] *mdzad*, leading one to believe that part of the text may indeed be a later addition than the date of 1657, which is given by Ehrhard (2005) as the date of completion for this appendage to *Glr*. It is also in this section that the text is given the title: *Dpal mnga' bdag pa'i rgyal rabs*.[6]

A complete translation of *NGR* has yet to be completed by scholars; however, the opening genealogical section has been the subject of a postscript on the Mar yul lineage in Vitali's work on the kingdoms of Gu ge pu hrang (Vitali 1996: 575–579). Furthermore, *NGR*, in its edited form in Lha tshe ring (2002: 27–62), has been used as a principal source for Franz-Karl Ehrhard's article (2005: 11–30) on

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[4] This historical account of Sikkim was published in 2002 by the author, and provides an interesting overview of Sikkimese history. The author of this book is currently principal of the Nyingma Shedra (*shes grwa*) in Gangtok, but originally an inhabitant and lama of the western Sikkimese monastery of Bkra shis sdings.

[5] Refer to Mullard (2005: 31–48) and chapter 2 of this book for details of this story.

[6] From here on the text will be referred to as *NGR*. Whilst this text is given the genre of *rgyal rabs*, it also shares many similarities with *rnam thar*, especially in the last two sections of the text which recount the lives and times of Stag sham can and Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin.

the lineage of Zhig po gling pa and its importance in early Sikkim, to which I will return later. The text has also been used as a source in a previous article on the formation of the Sikkimese coronation myth and the changes in the religio-political climate of early Sikkim (Mullard 2005: 31–48).

What follows here is a translation of selected passages of the text,[7] as can best be achieved given the numerous *lacunae* and spelling errors, and then a section dedicated to a commentary and analysis of *NGR*. It should be noted that a similar text to *NGR* can also be found in Sikkim. This text titled *Sems dpa' chen po phun tshogs rig 'dzin gyi gdung brten* [sic] *dkar chag bzhugs so*[8] (hereafter: *GTKC*) is also accredited to Byams pa bstan 'dzin. Unfortunately this text lacks a colophon, and given that large parts of it are similar to *NGR* it is difficult to determine whether this text precedes *NGR* or vice versa. The fact that the title of this text is described as a catalogue of the contents of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's funeral stupa indicates that it was written after this lama's death in 1656 or 1657.[9]

1.2. *The Text in Detail*

The opening pages of the *NGR* (548.2–552) deal principally with the genealogy of the rulers of Mar yul. These pages list a line of twenty-four rulers of the region, which is remarkably similar to the list of twenty-five Mar yul rulers presented in the *Gdung rabs zam 'phreng* (Vitali 1996: 495 fn833). Such similarities have already been discussed at some length, along with a translation of the opening passage of *NGR*, by Vitali (1996: 575–579) and rather than attempt a contribution to this already well-researched subject, and given my own inexperience as a scholar of western Tibetan regions, I would refer readers to the work already cited for further information on this subject.[10]

[7] The full text can be found in Appendix V.

[8] Particular thanks are due to Hissey Wongchuk for supplying me with a copy of this text for consultation. I have refrained from quoting extensively from this text as it is the subject of his doctoral research.

[9] The precise death of this lama is confused. In *NGR* it is stated that he was requested to stay alive for another year by his disciples.

[10] Arguments surrounding the authenticity of the lineage presented in the *Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs* have already been discussed in Vitali 1996. In which it is clearly stated that, although there are present some historical inaccuracies surrounding certain events, the validity of the royal lineage is reinforced by the fact that both the *Gdung rabs zam 'phreng* and the *Mnga' bdag rgyal rabs* are based on different independent

That being said the connections between descendants from the Mar yul royal lineage (in-so-far as they are considered descendants of the Tibetan emperors) and the early rulers of Sikkim, warrant further and detailed study here.

The selected summaries and translations presented here begin from the third section of *NGR* which details the life of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin. Prior to this part is an account of a descendant from the Mar yul royal family (and grandfather of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin), who leaves his secular position to pursue the life of a *yogi*. His life as a *yogi* is mirrored in his title: Stag sham can, i.e. the wearer of a tiger-skin skirt [*lit.* possessing the tiger-skin skirt].[11] The following selections below recount the life of Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin, considered as one of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi* of the later narratives (see chapter two for details), starting with his childhood and progressing through his life until his death in Sikkim in 1656 or 1657.

1.2.1. *The Life of Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin*

The parts of the text that deal with the life of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin begin on page 565 line 6 with a religious premonition. Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's grandfather, Stag sham can, had been undertaking a twelve year meditation retreat when he received a premonition regarding the birth of his grandchild and so sent a companion, named Ma chen bkra shis, with a prophetical letter to be delivered to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's mother. The letter stated the location of the birth, an instruction to call the child Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and a statement that the child would become the spiritual successor to Stag sham can.[12] Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was born in the Water Male Dragon year (1592), and his early life is recounted as being extremely remarkable. According to *NGR*: 567 around the age of five he had begun meditating on the *thod rgal* stage of Rdzogs chen. However, in 1614 his father lost his kingdom

sources (ibid.: 579). It may also be of interest to note that the lineage of Mar yul dates from the split in the territories of Mnga' ris skor gsum in the second quarter of the tenth century; Dpal gyi mgon received the territories of Mar yul (Vitali 2003b: 55).

[11] This section is translated and presented in appendix V.

[12] NGR: 566. *Bka' shog phul nas zhal pho brang bu zhig skye ba yod pas/ ming phun tshogs rig 'dzin du thogs nga'i rgyal tshab du gyur ba yin zhes 'dug go/*. "Having offered [her] the letter, [in which] it stated thus: 'as a boy will be born in the palace of Zhal, give him the name Phun tshogs Rig 'dzin, he shall be my successor'."

to one ’Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal and Phun tshogs rig ’dzin was forced out of the palace.[13]

Following this fall in status we are told of Phun tshogs rig ’dzin’s early life and career as a religious figure. It begins with his earliest teachings on Mahāmudrā, which he received from his father[14] and continues with his retreats in isolated places and burial grounds. It then follows with a number of anecdotes regarding the injustice felt by his former subjects to his current position as a wandering ascetic, to which Phun tshogs rig ’dzin responds by articulating the nature of *saṃsāra*. Such activities result in local fame, which he, like the archetypal wandering ascetic, regards as an obstacle to his spiritual endeavours. Euphemistically *NGR* goes on to recount that despite numerous threats to his life Phun tshogs rig ’dzin remains focussed on his spiritual path, though it appears that the dangers may have been too great for him as he then contemplates visiting his grandfather, who was residing in the palace of the Gtsang princes: Bsam grub rtse.[15] He received the full transmission from his grandfather and continued with his life as a wandering ascetic surviving, like Milarepa, on nettles and clad only in the cotton cloth of a *ras pa*.

He then succeeds his grandfather in the Gtsang court and as a result his fame spreads and he receives sponsorship for the establishment of retreat sites and monasteries. In one monastery he constructs statues of Guru Rinpoche, Ye shes mtsho rgyal, Khri srong lde btsan, Zhig po gling pa and Stag sham can. He is regarded as a master of the Gtsang tradition and given seats in other monasteries but he offers them to other Lamas such as Zhabs drung karma ’phrin las and Zhabs drung sgar chen.

[13] NGR: 567. *Lcags pho phag lo rgyal po ’jam dbyangs rnam rgyal gyis dmangs su phab ste*. “In the Iron male Pig year the king ’Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal caused [Phun tshogs rig ’dzin] to become [lit. to descend] a common person.”

[14] *NGR*: 568.1 *yab la phyag rgya chen po yi ge bzhi pa’i khrid gsan te/*. “He listened to the instruction on the four syllables of the Mahāmudrā from his father”. Prof. Franz-Karl Ehrhard noted that this probably refers to the Chakrasamvara hearing lineage *Bde mchog snyan brgyud* of Milarepa (Ehrhard: personal communication).

[15] *NGR*: 570. *lacuna…me dang zhes pa’i lo rgyal stag sham can gyi spyan sngar phebs par dgongs/ chibs spangs te phebs pas bsam ’grub rtser rgyal sa mchog dang mjal.* “In the year that is called the fire [lacuna] [he] desired to travel to the presence of the victorious Stag sham can and so, having given up [his] horse he went and had an audience in the supreme capital, Bsam ’grub rtse.

1.2.2. *Phun tshogs rig 'dzin in Sikkim: A Translation*

(574 line 5) According to the text called "Guru Rinpoche's ornament of the sun and moon": "The pure lineages of the *dharmarāja* must go to places of Skyid mo lung and Rku thang btsum, which are deep valleys" (575) On account of this he [Phun tshogs rig 'dzin] was thinking only of the *sbas yul*.

On account of the instability in Tibet such as the appearance [lit. the time that] of foreign forces [Mongolian] who caused changes in the situation and [caused] the premature end of the reign of Sde srid gtsang pa (Karma Phun tshogs rnam rgyal); having witnessed this he [Phun tshogs rig 'dzin] requested Sde srid gtsang pa to allow him to go to Sikkim but Sde srid gtsang pa refused.

Despite numerous earlier attempts by many to open the sacred hidden land of 'Bras ljongs none of them were completely successful.[16] And proclaiming that now the time [for entering this land] has come and in order to take hold of the land a meeting was held with Sgrub chen bstan pa rgya mtsho, the guide Bstan 'dzin brtson 'brus and the great meditator Don 'grub dpal bzang from Zla'u.[17]

Then after a short time; as it is said from Rdo rje gling pa's catalogue of prophesies which is called the *Gsal ba'i sgron me*: (576) "That there will arise an individual who is a descendant of the lineage of Khri srong lde btsan and who will be forced to flee to the interior of the sacred land of Sikkim like a sparrow chased by a hawk";[18] and because of conflict and suffering, on the 25th day of the third month of the water male horse year [1642], from the seat of the great kingdom of Zhigatse [the home of the Gtsang princes] and having made their parting gesture to all the people of worldly importance the father and son [with] the requirements [for their journey] departed for Sikkim.

After the opening of the door of the sacred place, they gave instructions for the promotion of the teachings to, and bound, all the protectors of the sacred land. They performed the ritual cleansing of the land such as water purification, prayers, *bsangs* offerings and tantric rituals of the

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[16] This is paraphrased a more direct translation would read: *Although, in the past, many people had appeared to open the doors to the sacred hidden land of 'Bras ljongs, no one appeared.*

[17] This passage is a little unclear.

[18] This passage referring to a sparrow (*byi'u*) being chased by a hawk is a common simile in Tibetan literature. The term *byi'u* as has been noted by Per Sørensen (1990: 268–271) to refer to almost any kind of small bird. In the analysis of song 62 of that work Sørensen explores the themes inherent in the simile of the sparrow being pursued by a hawk or falcon. The hawk he states is "used as the scare image *par excellence* when a bogey is sought for" in song 62 but can also be found in other forms of literature, like the text above, where the sparrow is an epithet for Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and the hawk/falcon that pursues him is the Mongolian army, their supporters and the changing religio-political climate of Tibet in the seventeenth century.

highest treasure vase. On the third day of the eighth month of this year they arrived in Yog bsam, which is the centre of this sacred land. From the *Lung bstan bka' rgya* it is said: "The opening of the door gradually like a crawling worm shall be done by a mantra holder of the *ras pa* tradition who is also a descendant of the *dharmarāja*." (577) Further it is stated in *The seven profound and secret prophesies of Khri srong lde btsan*: "If at the beginning there is a being who is an enlightened master my dynasty will blossom", thus it happened in accordance with these words.

Then for the benefit of his mission field amongst all the various ways of accumulating merit it [was decided that] the most beneficial way would be to establish temples and communities of the *saṅgha*; furthermore, it is stated in *The treasure colophon of Ratna gling pa*: "When, monasteries, stupas and temples are built in this place the land of Tibet will experience a hundred years of happiness and bliss." With the intention to fulfil these phrases the very same Sems dpa' chen po and the son Phun tshogs tshe ring rnam rgyal mnga' dbang bstan 'dzin po had a discussion and so on the auspicious days of the 11th month of the Water Sheep year [1644][19] (578) in the sanctuary of the plain of jewels [or in Rin chen thang gling] he acted as supervisor for the construction of the Gtsug lag khang [called] the red temple together with the [necessary] supports. After which, the consecration of the *maṇḍala* of *Vajrakilaya* was uncovered and since the ceremony of the auspicious consecration, which is like the intrepid struggle for perfection, was ordained, all the disharmonious elements and unpleasant experiences of the *lte bu* and *btsan lha* of this place were pacified, prosperity and sublime circumstances thrived like a lake in summer, the many pleasures of Tibet flourished and the way of auspicious circumstances and wishes was suitably established.

At that time, Zhal ngo a pa rdo rje of Sgang tog was consecrated with the eight auspicious symbols and the seven symbols of royal power and he was appointed as the king of this sacred land. Having been named as the King Phun tshogs rnam rgyal [by Phun tshogs rig 'dzin] they became preceptor and patron.

(579) In the main temple [Dmar po lha khang] as his long standing desire to establish this site as a special *maṇi* centre: how he did that is explained below. At the time Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was residing in Gtsang and made a pilgrimage to Lhasa. When [he] finished making a hundred thousand full body prostrations [around] the Jo bo and Ramoche, on the occasion of offering auspicious prayers for the Buddha-dharma to flourish and last long, in front of the statue of the 11 faced Avalokiteśvara and from the heart of the self-manifested statue of Avalokiteśvara an arrow length beam of light linked to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's own heart, and as the caretaker and attendants witnessed this extraordinary event, their faith became even stronger. Because of this event he developed a

[19] The Water Sheep year ran from early February 1643–early February 1644, thus the eleventh month of that year would be around January 1644.

profound resolution to establish a monastic community which would accumulate merit through the endless recitation of [Oṃ] maṇi [padma hūṃ] and he said he would not cease working towards this aim (580) and so on the noble day of the 5th of the 11th month it was [finally] established. Then Mnga' bdag sems dpa' chen po [= Phun tshogs rig 'dzin] arrived in Bkra shis sdings. According to the outer way this place is the palace of the peaceful and wrathful *Jinas*. According to the inner way it is consisting of the facets of the *vajrakāya*. According to the secret way it is viewed as the *maṇḍala* of the great perfection. Having infallibly recognised that Brag dkar bkra shis sdings is the navel of this sacred land, he took this place as his principal and most auspicious monastery [this means he took it as his principal residence and monastic seat]. And to be in accordance with Guru Rinpoche's prophetical transmissions on the virtuous day of *yon tan* of the ninth month of the Earth Ox year [1649], the ground of the settlement [or monastery] of Zil gnon was possessed. During the fifth month of the Iron Tiger year [1650] at Zil gnon the body of the Bsam yas protector arrived in the interior [of the temple] and he performed many wondrous miracles. According to the prophecy which was made by the Bsam yas chos skyong (581) there was a discussion of the patron and priest which included his [that is Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's] spiritual heir [and son] Phun tshogs tshe ring rnam rgyal, the king Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, and the Lama himself, and they agreed and mobilised the good people of all the laymen and clergy of Lho bod (Sikkim) and on the fifth day, which is the very day of *parama-kausalya* of the rising sign of the stars and planets of the first month of the Iron Hare year [1651] the foundations of both the temple of Maitreya and Pehar were laid out [in Bkra shis sdings]. Just as he had finished giving instructions regarding the sanctification of the statue of Maitreya Buddha with mantras and sacred relics the *Dharmarāja* A mgon bsam grub rab brtan[20] and his wife the queen A yum nyin zla rgyal mo [the king and queen of Glo] invited Sems dpa' chen po [to Mustang]. He stayed there for around a year. There he taught the nectar of the *dharma* and the minds of the people ripened and gained control over their actions.

(582) [Lacuna] The people of the principalities such as Gorkha offered veneration and respect. [Lacuna]. In order to achieve the attainments of *Vajrakilaya*, he went to Nepal[21] and in the meditation cave of Yang le shod he received the attainment of *Vajrakilaya*. He could visualise the face of the deity Rdo rje gzhon nu, this is fully explained in his biography. The Nepalese king also offered perfectly the requirements for his stay. Then he met with the king of Mag gor:[22] Mahārāja Hindu Phate. The auspicious circumstance suitable arose and they became united by

[20] He is noted in Jackson (1984: 134) as the ninth king of Glo who reigned during the 1650s.

[21] In this case Bal por refers to the Kathmandu valley.

[22] This probably refers to the king of the Magars (Ehrhard 2005: 21).

the preceptor-donor relationship. This king gave the land of Ka ko bha ri, where there are a hundred taxpayers. Then he returns back to Sikkim via the region of Ilam on the 10th day of the second month[23] and on this auspicious day (583) they performed the consecration ceremony of the Byams pa lha khang and Pe har lha khang [in Bkra shis sdings]. After finishing this [he] wanted to perform the first maṇi sgrub sde [sic dung phyur] in Bkra shis sdings but because his first residence was the Dmar po lha khang he performed the first maṇi dung phyur[24] and Bum chu there. When they performed the fifth maṇi Dung phyur in Bkra shis sdings as a result of that occasion [it] grew conch teeth and the water in the vase did not dry out, go rotten and had a good smell etc. and this was considered a blessing of Avalokiteśvara and became a suitable relic for devotion by the faithful.[25] To all the blessed high lamas and low people in this particular sacred land the teachings of the secret Rnying ma rgyud 'bum were given and for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings he took a long retreat he experienced immeasurable compassion [lacuna].

(584) According to the *Phags pa'i lung*: "The one who is an incarnation of an *Ārya* shall lead those who have been transformed by virtue [and good karma] and flee to the pure land of the *Ārya*s, which is 'Bras mo shong [sic]. This land is the seed of Sukhāvatī." Thus in accordance with this prophecy the incarnation of an *Ārya* [arrived in this land] and the precious teachings of the victorious one and in particular the teachings of the *sbas yul* spread in this place. Although on the tenth day of the Fire monkey year (1656), which is known as *gdong ngan*, he set his mind upon dissolving into the pure land of the illuminated lotus. In his poem [which appeared as a pure vision] it is said: "Rnga yab is called the pure land of the illuminated lotus, in the presence of Guru Rinpoche [sentence is unclear].

(585) In accordance with the meaning of this passage, having given advice to his disciples, he appeared to be tired at the end of the religious gathering on the tenth day and so he went to the statue of the *dharma* protectors [which said to him] "Although during the time the five corruptions are being spread it is appropriate to call upon us, still you need to stay for the benefit of the *dharma* and sentient beings" thus it was

[23] Presumably in the year of the water dragon [1652].

[24] This is a reference to the annual recitation ritual *maṇi dung phyur*, which was first held during the time of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and then shifted to his principal seat of Bkra shis sdings (Wongchuk, in press).

[25] This is a reference to *bum chu* which is the sacred water vessel of Bkra shis sdings. Each year on the evening of the 14th day after losar, the monks of Bkra shis sdings monastery remove the water vessel, measure the water level and remove three measures of water, which is then distributed to crowds of pilgrims on the 15th day after losar. After this festival the monks add three measures of water to the vessel and mark the water level. A fall in the water level is a bad omen for Sikkim, whereas a rise is seen as a sign for the prosperity of Sikkim and its people.

> requested. In addition, he was requested to stay by Phun tshogs Tshe ring ngag dbang bstan 'dzin dpal bzang [This is the son of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin] as well as various monks. The reply of the lord was: "I have already stayed five years longer than my destined life-span [in Sikkim] for the benefit of sentient beings. Now it is the right time for [me], an old man, to complete [my life]."
>
> (586) He gave the following order: "as for my funeral rites make preparations for the performance of rituals, which were followed by the *dharmarāja* stag sham can" following that on the *lacuna* day [his body dissolved into emptiness].... On that day in the direction that the body was facing there were no clouds in the sky and so the Lord himself ascended into the sky in the lotus position. Afterwards some people saw the apex of a white stupa of light piercing deep into the sky and with many such miraculous and wonderfully auspicious signs he passed away.

2. Understanding the Text for the Study of Early Sikkimese History

Before embarking on a detailed analysis of the text it may prove useful, at this point, to highlight a number of factors that make this an important document for the study of early Sikkimese history. Indeed the fact that this text has been used in the works cited earlier is indicative of its significance as a valuable, if not completely unbiased, primary source.

The basic structure of *NGR* can be divided into four sections. The opening section is a list of rulers in Mar yul starting with Dpal gyi mgon until the twenty-fourth ruler: one Bkra shis mgon.[26] The author of *NGR*, in the second and third sections, then elaborates on the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth rulers and their spiritual activities, focusing particularly on the life of Stag sham can and his activities towards the benefit of sentient beings and the *dharma*. This detail helps to contextualise the religious and political background of the main figure, and fourth principle section, of *NGR*: Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin and his religious activities in Sikkim as the pre-destined (as often referred to by means of quotations from *gter ma* literature) protagonist of the opening of Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs.

This being said, it is also the continuation of the wider history of the Mnga' bdag family and the royal line of Mar yul and ultimately it is

[26] This figure is not to be confused with the father of Ye shes 'od, who bears the same name. One Bkra shis mgon was the third king of Glo.

this wider context that alludes to the wishes and intention of its author and thus is an inextricable part of *NGR* as a whole.[27] In other words, whilst Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and his activities are the principal foci for the genealogy, it is the genealogical section which serves to contextualise and place the chief protagonist in a family lineage of ancient origin as well as a religious lineage (that of Zhig po gling pa), albeit infamous in the eyes of Dge lugs pa authorities, of some note. It is this setting that increases the significance of the final section of *NGR*.

As well as the general context of *NGR* the contents are also interesting for understanding, in part, the early religious and political climate of mid-seventeenth century Sikkim. Indeed the events and activities portrayed provide glimpses into the chronology of early Sikkim and the importance of the Mnga' bdag family and religious traditions in the region. Furthermore, the extensive political connections and contacts of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, both within Sikkim and the wider Tibetan and Himalayan regions, which are well documented in *NGR*, may indicate a high level of influence in the region.

It has been noted by Ehrhard (2004: 131–133) that *Glr* is often used as a preface to localised histories in various Tibetan regions. In this case the author's presentation of *Glr* and *NGR* as a continuous literary work, with no distinct break between *Glr* and *NGR* may be indicative of his motives for compiling the account of the Mnga' bdag family. Thus, the presentation of *NGR* as a continuous work helps to reinforce the historical lineage of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, as a descendant of the lineage of Khri srong lde btsan, which is crucially tied within the prophetical literature of Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs, and is encountered often in *NGR* (575–576 and 577). Indeed this is more significant when we take into consideration the religious lineage from which Phun tshogs rig 'dzin descends; a religious lineage intertwined with the political fortunes of the Gtsang princes (see section 2.1 below). Perhaps then the contextualisation of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin within the lineage of the Tibetan kings, albeit by a minor lineage, is an attempt to justify the position of this religious lineage and the person of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin as an individual who conforms to the prophetical

[27] Such a position is evident from, not only, the large proportion of the *Rgyal rabs* being devoted to this lineage history, but also the religio-political context that Stag sham can and later his grandson, Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, were intimately involved with. This of course refers to the period of Dge lugs pa ascendancy from the mid-sixteenth century until the establishment of the Dge lugs pa state in 1642.

literature surrounding the opening of Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs; as it is often repeated that a descendant of Khri srong lde btsan would open the hidden land.[28] Thus through the association of this Lama with this lineage, the author of *NGR* helps to legitimise his position as the destined and foretold figure of the prophetical tradition. And as noted in the introduction and chapters two and three the importance of *gter ma* legitimacy can be applied to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin; in a way which marks a *fait acompli* for his activities in Sikkim as the predestined figure of *gter ma* prophetical literature.

2.1. *The Religious Lineage of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin*

The religious lineage of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin is important for a number of reasons pertinent to the study of early Sikkimese history. On one side this lineage was heavily influenced by Byang gter teachings and practices and on the other side was inextricably linked to groups hostile to the rise of the Dge lugs pa. The latter point may provide a suitable reason for the flight of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin from central Tibet and the propagation of a tradition, threatened and persecuted in Tibet, in Sikkim. In the following section, it will be shown that circumstantial evidence appears to indicate that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin held an important and perhaps influential position in early Sikkim. If this was indeed the case one is forced to ask why this is not reflected in later historical narratives such as *BGR*. If there was a religious motivation for the reduced position of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin in these later narratives, it may be of some importance to examine the religious traditions in which he was trained.

From *NGR* we learn that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin received his initial training in Mahāmudrā from his father Bkra shis khri btsan, under whose guidance (presumably) he performed a number of meditation retreats, after which he travelled to central Tibet to meet his grandfather Stag sham can, who resided in the palace of the Gtsang prince; Bsam grub rtse. Following that meeting we are told stories of his pursuit of the *dharma*, which spanned a period of twelve years, during which time he received many instructions and lived a life akin to that of Milarepa. Finally he took up his grandfather's position in the Gtsang royal court, and devoted his life to the activities associated with

[28] For details see Rdo rje gling pa's treasure teachings referred to in the text above pp. 575–576.

a Lama of his position; i.e. building the supports of the *dharma* (monasteries, stupas, statues, publishing texts etc.) and giving teachings. In short, we are told that he becomes a famous and influential lama.

Although, it is not directly stated we can assume that he was brought up in the traditions of his grandfather, Stag sham can. A fact alluded to by his request to have his funeral rites performed in accordance with the traditions that Stag sham can established. So in order to understand the religious and political pressures on Phun tshogs rig ’dzin it is important to examine the relationships (both religious and political) his grandfather was involved in.

According to *NGR* Stag sham can first met with Byams pa phun tshogs (1503–1581), a ’Brug pa Lama from Skyid grong, from whom he studied Mahāmudrā and other teachings from the Bka’ brgyud tradition.[29] He then meets Byams pa bzang po,[30] whose teacher Byang gter blo gros rgyal mtshan also instructed Byams pa phun tshogs.[31] Blo gros rgyal mtshan was the lineage holder of Rig ’dzin rgod ldem can treasure cycles and was part of the unbroken lineage, which can be traced back through eight lineage holders. The lineage of Byams pa bzang po was passed onto Shakya rgyal mtshan and through him to the 3rd Yol mo sprul sku Bstan ’dzin nor bu (1598–1644), who was also a teacher of Stag sham can. The 3rd Yol mo sprul sku, along with Lha btsun nam mkha’ ’jigs med (the main protagonist of Sikkimese historical narratives), was one of Chos dbyings rang grol’s principal teachers. Chos dbyings rang grol (1610–1657)[32] received empower-

[29] NGR: 554. *Dgon pa nam gling zhes par rje byams pa phun tshogs dang mjal bas…gtsang lugs kyi snyan brgyud phyag rgya chen po yig* [lacuna: probably ge bzhi pa’i] *khrid dbang gdam ngag bcas gsan*. “In the monastery called Nam gling he met with the lord Byams pa phun tshogs and…he listened to the oral instructions and empowerments of the Mahāmudrā [and] the hearing lineage of Chakrasamvara.” For an explanation of the correlation between *phyag rgya chen po yig ge bzhi pa* and the hearing lineage of Chakrasamvara see footnote 14 above.

[30] NGR: 554–555. *De nas rjes’i bka’ bzhin yul cung gi gra skar zhes par mkhan byams pa bzang po’i spyan sngar phebs*. “Then in accordance with the master’s instructions he [Stag sham can] went into the presence of the master Byams pa bzang po in the place known as Yul cung gi gra skar.”

[31] Details of the connection between Byams pa phun tshogs and Blo gros rgyal mtshan can be found on www.tbrc.org/#library_person _Object-P2737

[32] Chos dbyings rang grol, according to Lha tshe ring, was not an admirer of the Mnga’ bdag tradition in Sikkim. In Lha tshe ring’s reading of Chos dbyings rang grol’s biography (composed by the fifth Dalai Lama) he notes that the death of Chos dbyings rang grol’s principal guru, Lha btsun chen po, was caused by poisoned food given to him by a member of the Mnga’ bdag family (Lha tshe ring 2006: 522).

ments in Byang gter and the Rig 'dzin srog grub from the *gter ston* Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med. He then subsequently passed those teachings on to the Fifth Dalai Lama (for full details of the lineages of Sikkim see figure 4.1 on page 105).

Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, if we can accept the statements of *NGR*, received instructions from his grandfather into these lineages (see figure 4.1), a fact further reinforced by the role of Byang gter in the Mnga' bdag monasteries of Sikkim. At first glance it appears that the lineage of the Mnga' bdag family is quite respectable especially given the later connection with the Fifth Dalai Lama and Byang gter. However, when we look at the historical context a little closer it becomes apparent that a simple association of a shared religious tradition is not always compatible with wider political trends as we can see through the association between the Mnga' bdag family and the Gtsang princes.

This is also specifically apparent in the fortunes of the Byang Ngam ring family, which for a long time, acted as the lay supporters for the Byang gter tradition. In this example we can see that political factionalism can also be found within a single religious lineage as well as between rival Buddhist schools. Karmay (2002: 30–31) notes that at some point after 1565, the two brothers from this family: Dbang po sde and Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan seem to have been involved in a competing struggle for the rule of Byang. Unfortunately for Dbang po sde the Gtsang princes (then the most influential family in central Tibet) allied themselves with Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan leading to the overthrow of Dbang po sde and his flight to Dbus. Dbang po sde's son, Ngag gi dbang po, was responsible for founding Rdo rje Brag and was one of the teachers of Chos dbyings rang grol, a teacher of the fifth Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama himself placed his teachings of Byang gter firmly within this lineage as is attested to in his corpus of visionary literature; for example in a number of visionary accounts the Fifth Dalai Lama actually received instructions and empowerments from Dbang po sde and Ngag gi dbang po (Karmay 2002: 30–31).

That being the case, Stag sham can, had met with Byams pa bzang po well before these later political developments as according to *NGR* he was sponsored by Dbang po sde's father Nam mkha' tshe dbang rdo rje.[33] Later in the text we find Stag sham can acting as the spiritual

[33] *NGR*: 555. *De skabs byang bdag po nam mkha' tshe dbang rdo rje dang/ bdag mo mnga' bdag phun tshogs rgyal mo gnyis kyi nye bar 'khyud mdzad.* "At that time

guide to Nam mkha' tshe dbang rdo rje's son, though at this point it is still difficult to determine to which son this refers.[34] However, given that he and his grandson had close contact with the Gtsang princes one is tempted to speculate on Stag sham can's involvement in those events and that he acted as the spiritual guide to Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan. Whether, he was involved or not currently remains obscure but as we shall see from his connections with Zhig po gling pa and the Gtsang princes his family was perhaps not immune from the wider political context of late sixteenth and early to mid-seventeenth century Tibetan politics.

As Ehrhard noted (2005), the Mnga' bdag family were also practitioners of the lineage of Zhig po gling pa (one of the *snang sog gong gsum*).[35] Such a proposition appears correct given the account of the religious tradition of the Mnga' bdag family as contained in *NGR*[36] and given the scarcity of research on the religious lineages of Sikkim, it is understandable why Ehrhard is cautious to draw any major conclusions from this evidence. This is particularly important given that the Mnga' bdag 'school' in Sikkim is now more commonly associated with Byang gter and the religious cycles of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can (particularly in Gnam rtse, from where *NGR* was first found).[37]

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the lord and lady of Byang Nam mkha' tshe dbang rdo rje and Phun tshogs rgyal mo acted [as] devotees" This indicates that Stag sham can had received Byang gter teachings during the life of Nam mkha' tshe dbang rdo rje and it was only after the latter's death that the competition between his two sons surfaced.

[34] *NGR*: 558.2–3. *Byang bdag po nam mkha' rdo rje'i sras snga pa* lacuna *bzhin bu'i dbu bla mdzad*. The problems of identification are further entrenched given that the biography of Stag sham can has yet to be discovered. However, Ehrhard is of the opinion that Stag sham can acted as the spiritual guide to Dbang po sde (personal communication). If indeed that is the case, it does not have a major impact on the position of Stag sham can within the group of those hostile towards the rise of the Dge lugs pa as the events that led to the exile of Dbang po sde had yet to take place. In fact, if Ehrhard is correct, there is an interesting example of historical irony at play given that the fifth Dalai Lama associated himself within the Byang gter lineage of Dbang po sde he would fall within the same lineage as Stag sham can; which given that Stag sham can revered Zhig po gling pa and that the fifth Dalai Lama was instrumental in the prohibition of Zhig po gling pa's teachings, is an interesting contradiction.

[35] This group included Sog zlog pa blo gros rgyal mtshan, Gzhan phan rdo rje as well as Zhig po gling pa. They were much disliked by the Fifth Dalai Lama, on account of their opposition to the rising Dge lugs pa.

[36] See pp. 553–563 for further details, which can be found in Appendix V.

[37] It may be of some interest to note that Gnam rtse rdzong (the former residence of Phan bde dbang mo), which was converted into a monastery in 1836, is now known as Byang gter Mnga' bdag dgon pa. See figure 7.2 on page 169 for a photo of this *rdzong*.

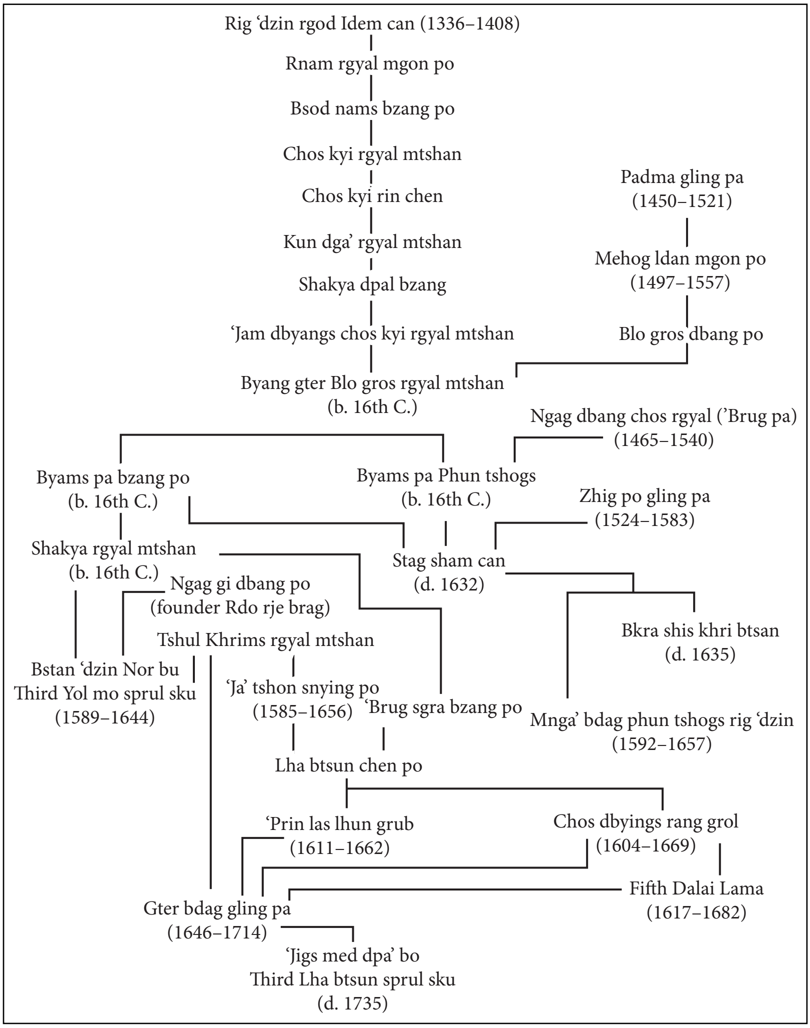


Figure 4.1 The religious lineages of Sikkim.

If we study the activities of Zhig po gling pa, it is clear that Zhig po gling pa was involved in sixteenth century Tibetan politics, by exploiting flood prevention schemes and *Sog zlog* rituals. During the mid to late sixteenth century and up until the establishment of the Dge lugs pa state the practices of *Sog zlog* and flood prevention took on, specifically, politically inspired motivation especially in the Lhasa area. There are a number of detailed articles, in circulation, on the life and

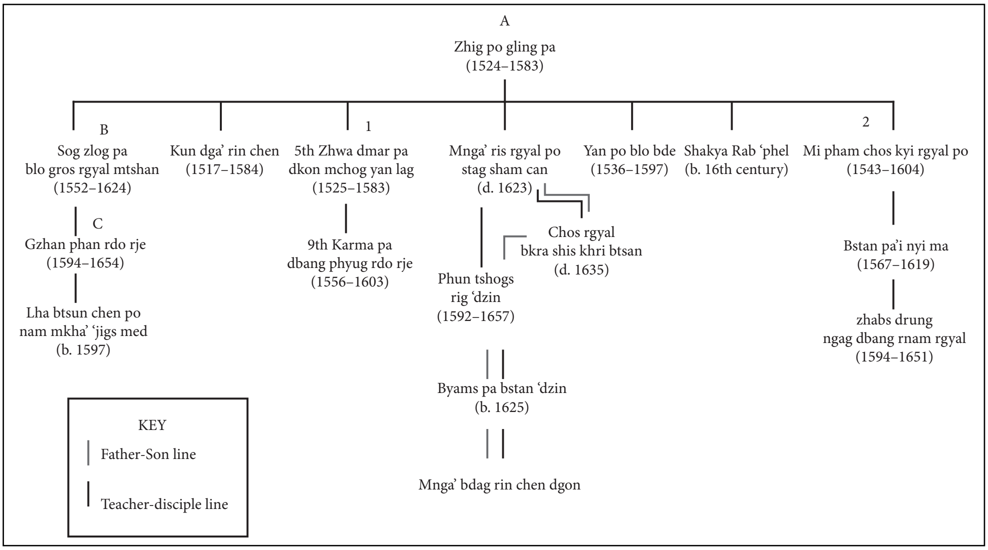


Figure 4.2 The Mnga' bdag lineage.

activities of Zhig po gling pa (Namely: Sørensen 2003, and Akester 2001a and 2001b).

Sørensen looks more generally than Akester, who focuses on the activities of Zhig po gling pa regarding the development of flood control politics in the Lhasa region as a means for extending religio-political hegemony in central Tibet. This is particularly pertinent after the advent of the Dge lugs pa and the role of Tsong kha pa in identifying Lhasa as the spiritual centre of Tibet, through his renovation of the Jo khang and the establishment of the *smon lam chen mo*, leading to the increasing importance of the Dge lugs pa in the political and spiritual affairs of the Lhasa area (Sørensen 2003: 112–113). As such flood prevention schemes in Lhasa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries became intertwined with sectarian rivalry and the struggle for political supremacy in the region as the ability to construct temples or dams was indicative of changing political trends and regional dominance. An example of which (Akester 2001a and 2001b), is the case of rival flood prevention rituals conducted by Zhig po gling pa and the Third Dalai Lama.

Akester (2001a) details the history behind the religio-political conflict between the Third Dalai Lama Bsod nams rgya mtsho and Zhig po gling pa, which mirrored the political struggles between the Skyid shod nobles and the nobles of 'Bri gung. Zhig po gling pa and the

Third Dalai Lama represented rival factions of the ongoing pursuit of hegemonic power in Central Tibet; Zhig po gling pa was born into the noble family of Snang rtse, who were dominant in the Lhasa region during the rule of the Rin spungs. Zhig po gling pa also received religious and political support from the 'Bri gung pa and the 'Brug pa and so was also closely allied to the Sde srid of Gtsang. On account of which his activities in Lhasa during this period were marked by the ebb and flow of his patrons' fortunes in Central Tibet, using the advantageous position of his supporters to increase his flood prevention rituals in Lhasa, which were used as a means of displaying political dominance as such rituals (and counter rituals) had become synonymous with the political climate of the period. So antagonistic were these actions, the Fifth Dalai Lama attempted to refute the teachings of Zhig po gling pa as fraudulent (Akester 2001a: 8) and following the establishment of Dge lugs pa hegemony the lineage was suppressed in central Tibet; this was similar to the fate of the 'Brug pa. Taking this into consideration, references to Zhig po gling pa in the context of *NGR* is important for understanding some of the possible reasons for the flight of Tibetan lamas to Sikkim and particularly the flight of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin. It may also account for the minor position of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin in later historical narratives.[38]

The passage in *NGR* regarding the relationship between Stag sham can and Zhig po gling pa is slightly obscure but seems to indicate that Stag sham can acted as a sponsor to Zhig po gling pa, who in turn initiated the former into his *gter ma* discoveries.[39] Whether Stag sham can actively agreed with the politics of Zhig po gling pa and others or not, as not all religious figures were politically motivated, it is apparent that he had links with other figures, besides Zhig po gling pa, who were associated with anti-Dge lugs pa politics (broadly defined).

The political history of sixteenth and seventeenth century central Tibet is generally well known and it is not my intention here to recount the rise of the Dge lugs pa state. However, it may prove useful to explore some of the connections between various figures of that time with our principal characters as a means towards understanding Sikkimese historiography and history. For this reason here we will turn

[38] This may be due to the later ties between Tibet and Sikkim.
[39] Ibid.: 557: *don la gter gsar thams cad bum pa gang jo'i tshul dang gzhan yang chos mang du bsan no/.*

our attention away from the specifics of the Zhig po gling pa lineage in relation to Stag sham can and his grandson Phun tshogs rig ’dzin and begin to contextualise these two figures in the religio-political matrix of sixteenth and seventeenth century Tibet. As it is this context that may provide one reason for the obscured position of the Mnga’ bdag lineage in later Sikkimese historiography and may prove a useful context from which a re-examination of Sikkimese history may emerge.

In figure 4.2 (p. 106), a number of different Lamas, who received initiations into Zhig po gling pa’s gter ma revelations, are presented and from this list we can identify a number of people who are commonly associated with groups hostile to the Dge lugs pa establishment. The most notable of these are the *snang sog gong gsum*,[40] who were the recipients of a series of strict refutations of their lineages, by the Fifth Dalai Lama.[41] It has also been noted that the Dalai Lama went as far as to attempt a ban on the propagation of Zhig po gling pa’s lineage, on account of its overtly anti-Dge lugs pa politics. Lineages of other members of the transmission, noted 1 and 2 in figure 4.2, were also subject to a similar fate, as a result of their perceived threat to the new Dge lugs pa establishment.[42]

Although the political context of Tibet was quite complex and that it may be too simplistic to describe various religious and political groups as a united alliance against Dge lugs pa ascendancy,[43] and noting that there were many religious figures unhappy about the political ambitions of their sponsors, the lineage of Phun tshogs rig ’dzin appears to have emerged from a group of practitioners discontent with religio-political developments of the time. This is further illustrated by Phun tshogs rig ’dzin’s appeals to the Gtsang prince to allow him to go to Sikkim, which in the first instance was denied, indicating that Phun tshogs rig ’dzin was subordinate to and perhaps dependent upon the Gtsang princes for patronage and it was only after the fate of the

[40] Marked as A, B and C in figure 4.2 on page 106.

[41] Lha tshe ring has just published an interesting book on this subject and the traditions of the *snang sog gong gsum* in Sikkim. For details see the bibliography.

[42] The Gtsang prince Karma bstan srung dbang po ostensibly invaded Lhasa in 1605 on account of Mongolian attacks on Tshurpu after the Zhwa dmar pa had offended them. The ’Brug pa faired similarly, it was prohibited during the rule of the Fifth Dalai Lama (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 55).

[43] The events surrounding the recognition of Ngag dbang rnam rgyal as the ’Brug pa hierarch, such as the involvement of the Gtsang prince on the side of Ngag dbang rnam rgyal’s rival and the subsequent flight of the Zhabs drung to Bhutan is a case in point. For further details of this see Aris, 1979.

Gtsang princes was sealed in 1642 that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was able to make his journey to Sikkim. This seems to indicate that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and his grandfather were involved with a broad network of both lay sponsors and religious leaders, which, with hindsight, have been regarded as opponents of the Dge lugs pa and their Mongolian supporters.

2.2. *Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and His Activities in Sikkim*

The most common theme in *NGR* is the way in which the author counterpoises the prophetical tradition and quotes from *gter ma* prophesies with historical events, as a means of identifying the activities of his father as part of a pre-ordained structure. This, as we have seen in previous chapters and which we will also notice in the following chapters, is a common motif in Sikkimese historical and religious literature of most periods.[44] Whilst this is an interesting stylistic issue, the content of *NGR* already differs greatly from the more established accounts of the formation of the Sikkimese state and later Sikkimese histories, a point first noted by Lha tshe ring in 2002. Firstly, it is the absence of two of the three other characters of the coronation myth, crucial in later historical accounts, which is immediately noticed by any reader of *NGR*. This is particularly striking given that the early sections of the work often refer to meetings between members of the Mnga' bdag family and other religious figures, yet on the arrival of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin in Sikkim there is little mention of any other lama. Though, it is clear that there was an interaction between the family and Lha btsun chen po as he gave the name of Bkra shis rnam rgyal to the author of *NGR*, this is the only occurrence of a reference to one of the other members of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*, with the obvious exception of the first Sikkimese king, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal.

Such a lack of references to other religious figures may seem of little consequence as *NGR* is primarily an account of the Mnga' bdag family and of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and his activities in Sikkim. However, it is puzzling given the fact that in the later historical tradition such an importance is placed on the meeting of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi* in Yog bsam and their role in the formation of the Sikkimese kingdom as it seems (at first glance) improbable that such an approach was

[44] This is also true of Tibetan literature too; however, such themes are dominant in Sikkim on account of the high local regard for the *Gter ma* tradition.

simply manufactured. Yet *NGR* gives the impression that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was alone in *his* discovery of the *sbas yul*, which is further reinforced by references to prophesies which identify a single destined figure, rather than the quartet of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi* prophesies of Ratna gling pa. Taken at face value, *NGR* suggests that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin acted alone (though he was accompanied by his son and some companions) in the series of events documented. This is problematic when compared with *LSG* which clearly notes that the formation of Sikkim was in accordance to the prophecy of *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*.

The two events that contradict with later historical narratives centre on the date of the construction of the Dmar po lha khang and the coronation of the first Sikkimese king. According to *NGR* the Dmar po lha khang was built in the eleventh month of the Water Sheep year, which in all likelihood corresponds to early January 1644. It was also during or around this date that the coronation of the first Sikkimese king occurred.[45] We are told that during the enthronement the king is given the new name of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, and from that time he is no longer referred to by his earlier name of A phag rdo rje. It has already been noted in chapter two that in later Sikkimese histories the name of A phag rdo rje is given to the father of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. Rather than this being the case it appears as if the first king's two names have been transformed into two separate individuals. This adds further problems to the already awkward issue of identifying the ancestors of the Sikkimese royal dynasty (see chapter three for further discussion of this point). These two events lack any third party, besides Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's son or father, in attendance; indicating that this event lacked the participation of the two other Lamas of later historical accounts. *BGR* (see chapter two) ignores this and instead proposes that the coronation of the first Sikkimese king did indeed take place in 1642 (the same date documented in *LSG*), this is conceivable if one were to interpret the date of the Water Sheep year as a scribal error for the Water Horse year. Given the numerous *errata* in this text, such a proposition is not necessarily invalid; however, this is unlikely as the accuracy of dates in *NGR* is perhaps one of the most consistent elements in this manuscript and that it is unlikely for *rta* and *lug* to be

[45] In *NGR* the construction of the Lha khang dmar po actually precedes the coronation, whereas in *BGR* and Lha Tsering (2002: 42–43) the chronology of these two events is reversed.

confused by Tibetans.[46] Unfortunately, as shall be shown in later chapters, the precise date of the enthronement of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, and hence the official start of the Sikkimese dynasty, remains elusive with numerous contradictory dates proposed by different authors; and it should be noted that the recognition of the dynasty by religious figures does not necessarily indicate the start of the dynasty, the power of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, nor even the formation of the state.

Following the coronation of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal *NGR* recounts the events surrounding the construction of Zil gnon monastery in 1649 (completed in 1650) and Bkra shis sdings in 1651. In between these two events we are also told that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin held a meeting which was attended by his son and the Sikkimese king. The subject of this conversation was religious patronage and it has been argued by Ehrhard (2005: 20) that the topic of this meeting was to allow Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's son to succeed him as royal preceptor. *NGR* does not explicitly state this as there are a number of *lacunae* in this passage of the text though the context implies that this may well have been the case. This then further implies that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin held the position of royal preceptor, and if this was indeed the case then the position of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin has been misrepresented in later historical writings.[47]

In those later histories Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med is named as the chief royal preceptor and the main protagonist of the coronation of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. Already, according to *NGR*, Lha btsun chen po was not present at the coronation, or if he was he is not mentioned in this source; and if we can accept the evidence presented in *NGR* as authentic it seems to suggest that the precise events surrounding the establishment of the Sikkimese state (as historical narratives define the establishment of the state by the coronation of the first Sikkimese king)

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[46] The most common scribal errors I have noticed in regards to Tibetan dates are: *khyi* for *byi* (and vice versa) and *rta* for *stag*. The reason for these errors is probably due to the fact that these syllables are phonologically similar in certain Tibetan dialects.

[47] Lha Tshe ring also proposes that this event indicates the establishment of Byams pa bstan 'dzin as the successor to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin. A literal reading of this passage, however, indicates that this meeting was inspired by the construction of the monastery in Bkra shis sdings. It is clear that for the construction to take place significant labour and financial costs would have been accumulated, and Phun tshogs rig 'dzin would have needed the support of the Chos rgyal in order to complete the monastery. In *GTKC* it is noted that Byams pa bstan 'dzin did succeed his father as the principal religious figure in Sikkim in 1656 or 1657.

are markedly different from those presented in later works. Whether or not this was the case, though it appears likely that it was, Phun tshogs rig 'dzin must have received high level patronage to embark upon large building projects as is the case with the Dmar po lha khang, Zil gnon monastery and Bkra shis sdings. Moreover, the fact that he was responsible for the construction of a monastery and all the ritual activities in Bkra shis sdings, which according to the writings of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can and other *gter ston* associated with the *sbas yul* is the most sacred place in Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs, suggests that he was particularly influential.

3. Conclusion

NGR is an interesting text as it is the earliest manuscript still surviving today which details the life and activities of Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin and his predecessors. It tells a story of the Mnga' bdag family, its origins as rulers descended from the Tibetan Emperors in the western Tibetan region of Mar yul, the religious activities of the family and ultimately the destruction of that family's political power at the hands of a rival during the life of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin. It also tells us about the religious lineage of the family, which suggests a number of reasons for Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's ultimate departure from Tibet to Sikkim.

In addition to these points it also reports a different interpretation of events in early Sikkim. *NGR* informs us that prior to the coronation of the first Sikkimese king, Phun tshogs rig 'dzin had already begun constructing religious sites in Yog bsam. The coronation duly followed that event, in which Phun tshogs rig 'dzin alone was responsible for the enthronement of the Chos rgyal. We are also told of the development of the *mchod yon* relationship between the new king and the lama, and it was probably with this royal support that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was able to begin his large scale building projects: constructing three monasteries (including the most sacred in Sikkim) in the space of twelve years. These events give the impression that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was, in all likelihood, the most influential lama in Sikkim at that time.

This may not be such a surprising fact given that *NGR* was written by his own son, which may lead one to believe that this work is open to bias. Indeed that may be the case. In order to examine the possibility for bias, in the following chapter I will explore the life and

activities of Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med who, according to *BGR* and other traditional narratives, is considered the primary architect of the Sikkimese state. Through analysis of other seventeenth century documents, regarding the life of Lha btsun chen po, I will examine the extent to which the alternative events documented in *NGR* and the more orthodox approach of traditional narratives can be held as being accurate accounts of early Sikkimese religion and politics.

CHAPTER FIVE

LHA BTSUN CHEN PO AND THE FORMATION OF SIKKIM

In the previous chapter an important source for the study of early Sikkim was presented and a number of key themes were addressed which differed greatly from the traditional narratives discussed in chapter two. Indeed rather than Lha btsun chen po as the crucial figure of early Sikkim, we find that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin position was highlighted. This may have been expected given that the source in question was written by his son, and so provides an account of history favourable to this Lama and his religious tradition. However, in this chapter a number of sources written or accredited to Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med (also known as Kun bzang rnam rgyal and Lha btsun chen po), the key protagonist of the traditional narratives, will be examined and compared with the account in chapter four. And through these sources we will be able to discern a picture of early Sikkim considerably different to the narratives in chapter two.

This chapter focuses on three principal texts found within the collected works of Lha btsun chen po.[1] The first text, *Mkha' spyod sprul pa'i pho brang 'bras mo gshongs su har sangs sgyu ma'i rol rtsed kyis lam yig* (hereafter *LTLY*), despite being defined as a *lam yig* details important historical information. The second text; *Lha btsun chen po'i rnam thar gsol 'debs* (hereafter *LTNT*); provides some interesting insights into the construction of a number of Sikkimese monasteries as well as some contextual information. The final text, *Kun bzang rnam par rgyal ba* (hereafter *KZNG*), is an important text for the study of Lha btsun chen po's early life and career in Sikkim. There is a fourth text, which may be of interest to the scholar of Lha btsun chen po's *gter ma* cycles: *Lha btsun chen po'i gsang ba'i rnam thar*.[2]

All of these three texts are accredited to Lha btsun chen po and written in his characteristic poetical style, where he interposes lengthy

[1] For full details on each source, please see the bibliography.

[2] For the student of Sikkimese history this text provides a detailed and interesting account of the history of Lha btsun chen po visions and is an invaluable source to understanding his classic gter ma *Rig 'dzin srog sgrub*.

poetical songs, with key biographical and historical information. In many ways his style mirrors that attributed to Milarepa, and the songs and poems can come in a variety of lengths and subjects, from the beautiful hills of Sikkim to discourses on Rdzogs chen. As mentioned above it is the historical and biographical notes that punctuate the poetical passages that warrant the attention of historians of early Sikkim. However, this does not mean that the poetical passages are devoid of importance; far from it, in fact these sections often provide important contextual information, such as the opening passage of *LTLY*.

This chapter will begin with a portrayal of Lha btsun chen po's early life and spiritual training. This will detail the teachings he received and his personal teachers. This shall be followed by a section on his role in Sikkim beginning with an analysis of his reasons for going to Sikkim, which were heavily influenced by the changing religio-political climate in Tibet during the mid-seventeenth century and the fear of, if not actual, religious suppression. A chronology of his activities in Sikkim shall also be discussed, including his role in an enthronement ritual involving the first Sikkimese Chos rgyal, and a clarification of his arrival in Sikkim and other chronological problems encountered in the study of his life. The penultimate part of this chapter shall look at Lha btsun chen po's role in early Sikkim and compare that to the influential position of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and his son Byams pa bstan 'dzin. The final section shall then re-visit the chronological problems surrounding the 'coronation' and seek to ground our understanding of this ritual in the context of the royal symbolism of the *cakravātin* model in Buddhist theory and practice.

1. The Early Life of Lha btsun chen po

What we know of Lha btsun chen po's life has mainly been based upon information contained within traditional narratives and folk histories. Besides his place and date of birth, there is little in those narratives that have been located within the historical milieu of Tibet and Sikkim. For example such basic facts like his arrival in Sikkim are the subject of dispute. As such, knowing the main events of his life and his activities in Sikkim is of great importance to understanding the development of the Sikkimese state. For this reason, amongst others, this section is dedicated to a brief description of the life of Lha btsun chen po based upon the sources mentioned above.

All sources seem to indicate that Lha btsun chen po was born in 1597 in [S]bya[r] yul. [S]bya[r] yul is a region of southern Tibet north of the border with modern Arunachal Pradesh, in between Gnyal and Dwags po (Huber 1992: 15).[3] According to the preface of his collected works he was born into the noble family of Lha btsad po, on account of which his title Lha btsun is said to have originated. There is little evidence neither to prove nor disprove such a view, though normally those with the title Lha btsun are considered to be ordained people of royal origin. His father appears to have died when he was quite young[4] and so is absent in Lha btsun chen po's main biographical works. His mother, however, is briefly mentioned in *KZNG* as Yid 'ong bu dga'.[5] The death of his father seemed to affect the young boy, as well as his mother and paternal grandmother, for he was required to spend most of his time attending to the family's animals, whilst his mother was preoccupied with 'worldly concerns'.[6]

From the age of eleven (c.1608) he was filled with the desire to dedicate his life to religious study, and being unable to practice he decided to run away from home by fleeing to the nearby hermitage of Gsung snyan grwa tshangs.[7] He stayed here under the tutelage of O rgyan dpal sbyor (Mullard, 2003a: 13–15) for six years. With the exception of learning to read and perform basic rituals and recitations, he did not gain any deeper insight into the dharma. On account of which, up until the age of seventeen (c.1614) he was compelled to work as a common tenant concerned only with worldly affairs.[8] This apparently caused him great sadness and so he decided, even if it cost him his life doing so he would pursue his desire to gain deeper knowledge of the dharma. And so he set forth toward a community of tantric

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[3] For further details of this region see Huber 1992, this article also includes an interesting description of a Tibetan map of the area.

[4] *Pha rgad po de yang grongs/* (*KZNG*: 51).

[5] *Ma yid 'ong bu dga' zhes bya ba* (*KZNG*: 49).

[6] *Ma rang dang a lchi rgan gzhon tshor 'jig rten gyi khur bab/ bdag ni phyugs lug/ rta mdzo ba be'u la sogs pa 'tsho bor skang cig kyang dal ba med*…(*KZNG*: 51).

[7] *Lo bcu gcig nas chos la gdungs pa'i bsam pa bzod blag med pa skyes/ chos ming ni ma'i khong pa na yod nas btags 'dug kyang lo bcu gcig gi bar chos byed rgyu ma byung/ de nas rang gi yul dang nye bar nye ba'i sa phyogs gsung snyan grwa tshang de nyid du chos bros la phyin te/* (*KZNG*: 55).

[8] *Klog yig bya ba chos spyod tsam las chos gsha' ma cig byed pa'i spyan rnams bkra bar mi 'dug pas/ 'jig rten gyi bya ba dang 'dres shas pa lo bcu bdun gyi bar byed dgos pa byung/* (Ibid).

practitioners in eastern Kong po.[9] On the way he stayed in Dwags po rtse le with Rig 'dzin mchog grub rnam rgyal for around two months, before continuing his journey with provisions that were given to him by this man.[10] He reaches Smin grol bskyed rdzogs gling, where there are around four hundred retreat cells and for around two years he worked as an assistant to one of the ascetics there. He then engaged in Anu yoga, and other practices there for five years (c.1621).

Following that he travelled to eastern Kong po where he met Bsod nams dbang po (one of his principal teachers) and from whom he received the transmissions and instructions in the profound new and old traditions.[11] In particular he received the *Bla ma yang tig*, part of the *Snying tig ya bzhi* by Klong chen pa, of whom Lha btsun Chen po was considered a reincarnation (*LTNT*: 17) amongst other key treatises. In total he remained with Bsod nams dbang po for around one year.[12] Following his time with this Lama he then received a number of instructions from O rgyan dpal 'byor (presumably his earlier teacher), including the complete initiation of the fourteen *maṇḍala*s of the *Bla ma dgongs 'dus*, *O rgyan gling pa'i thang yig*, *Phyag rdor dregs pa kun 'dul*, and Padma gling pa's *Bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho*, amongst many others.[13] He also received important teachings from Gzhan phan rdo rje (1534–1654), a student of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan. This Lama had close connections with the lineage of Zhig po gling pa[14] and passed on these teachings to Lha btsun chen po. Gzhan phan rdo rje was also a holder of Sangs rgyas gling pa's *gter ma* tradition, as well as that of Padma gling pa, Kaḥ thog pa padma blo gros and also received

[9] *Shar kong po'i yul la grags che ba rtse le gsang sngags kyi pho brang du chas par brtsams so/* (*KZNG*: 56).

[10] *De nas dwags po rtse ler rig 'dzin mchog grub rnam rgyal gyi drung du slebs/ der sku bzhogs su zla ba gnyis tsam bsdad/ lam chas dang dgos cha sogs yang gnang ste kong po la phyin no/* (Ibid: 60).

[11] *De yang mtshan brjod par dka' ba shar kong po'i yul na 'gran pa'i zla thams cad dang bral ba grub thobs bsod nams dbang po de nyid kyis gtsos pa'i yongs 'dzin dam pa bka' drin can rnams la/ gsar rnying gi dam chos zab pa dang rgya che ba'i rgyud lung man ngag dpag tu med pa zhig nos pa las/* (*KZNT*: 66).

[12] *zla ba bcu gnyis kyi bar dam pa de'i drung du bsdad cing/* (*KZNT*: 69).

[13] *Yang rig 'dzin mchog gi sprul sku o rgyan dpal 'byor gyi zhabs drung du/ bla ma dgongs pa 'dus pa dkyil 'khor bcu bzhi'i dbang sgrub chen lugs dang/ po ti bcu gnyis lung yongs rdzogs pa/ o rgyan gling pa'i thang yig/ kun mkhyen chen po'i mdzod bdun yongs rdzogs/ phyag rdor dregs pa kun 'dul/ bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho/ gnyen po lha gsum*… (*KZNT*: 74) the list continues.

[14] We have already encountered this figure as a principal teacher to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's grandfather (see chapter 4 for details).

teachings from the sixth Zhwa dmar pa and tenth Karmapa (for full details see diagram 5.2). He passed many of these teachings to Lha btsun chen po.[15]

Having received teachings from a few other Lamas he met another of his key teachers, Ngag dbang 'brug sgra bzang po. 'Brug sgra bzang po, was a lineage holder of Nub dgon Byang gter tradition, which can be traced back to Śākya bzang po (the first Yol mo sprul sku) and back through Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's line to Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can himself. It is no surprise then that many of the teachings Lha btsun received from him were *gter ma*(s) discovered by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can, including the *Dgongs pa zang thal*. He also received other works such as O rgyan gling pa's *Thang yig sde lnga*, and Pad ma las 'brel rtsal's *rdzogs chen gter ma Mkha' 'grol snying thig*.

Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med continued to receive teachings and instructions from a number of Lamas, for example in *KZNG*: 102–103 there lists over thirty five Lamas. He had five main teachers, of which two can be considered as his primary teachers: Bsod nams dbang po (who we have already encountered above) and 'Ja' tshon snying po; who he met c.1619 (see figures 5.1 and 5.2 below for details of those lineages). It was with these two figures that Lha btsun chen po spent most time and who occur most frequently in the works accredited to him. It was from these two that he received initiations into important Rnying ma *gter ma* traditions. *KZNG* lists up to four folios of instructions received by 'Ja' tshon snying po alone, with further lists of teachings received by other lamas.[16] Amongst the teachings he received from 'Ja' tshon snying po are: Padma gling pa's *Kun bzang dgongs pa kun 'dus*, Karma gling pa's *Zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol*, Sangs rgyas gling pa's *Bla ma dgongs 'dus*, Ratna gling pa's *Thugs sgrub yang snying 'dus pa*, and Mnga' bdag Myang's *Twenty five scriptures on the eight mahāyoga deities* (for full details see *KZNT*: 79–86).

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[15] *Lo chen ngag gi dbang po gzhan phan rdo rje'i zhabs drung du/ bka' brgyud bde legs 'dus pa pu ti bcu gnyis kyi dbang lung yongs rdzogs zla ba lnga'i bar du brtse bas bskyangs/ gzhan yang rje de nyid kyi drung du/ bstan gnyis gling pa'i chos skor/ phyag chen rig mun sel/ rdzogs chen phung po zag med la sogs pa gsang sngags lam rim gyi dbang lung yongs rdzogs/ zhig po gling pa'i chos skor/ rgyal tshab spyi lugs kyi dbang/* (*KZNT*: 75).

[16] *Khyad par du sprul pa'i sku rig 'dzin chen po 'ja' tshon snying po'i zhabs drung du/ gsang sngags rnying ma'i chos skor rnams ji ltar thob tshul rnam grangs ni/ gter ston rdo rje gling pa'as gter nas gdon drangs pa/ lta ba klong yangs/ gu ru drag po dmar chung/…pad+ma gling pa'i kun bzang dgongs pa rang grol…sangs rgyas gling pa'i bla ma dgongs pa 'dus pa'i pu ti bcu gnyis/* (KZNG: 79.3–80.2).

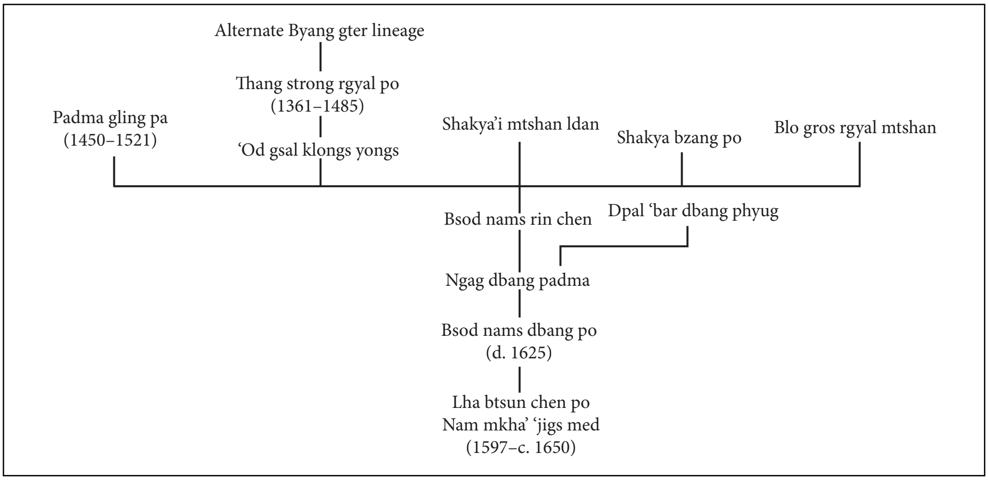


Figure 5.1 The religious lineage of Bsod nams dbang po.

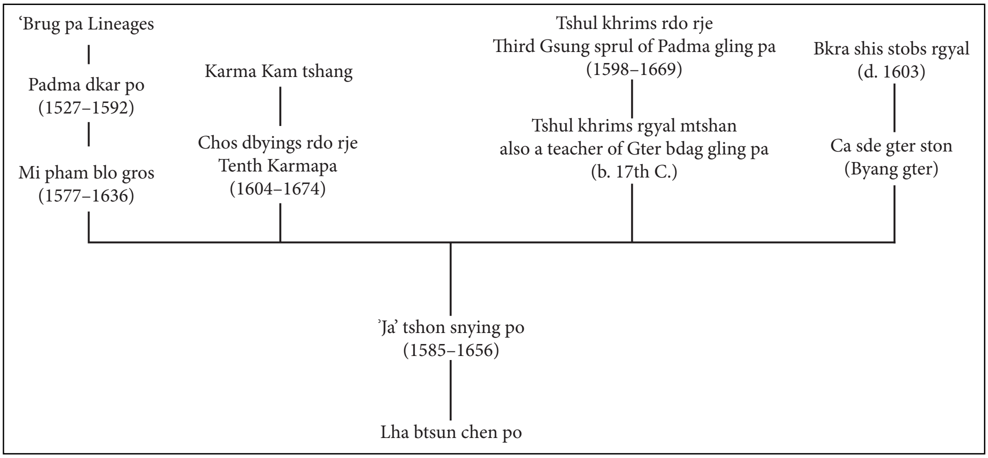


Figure 5.2 The religious lineage of 'Ja' tshon snying po.

Lha btsun chen po, as well as being the student of a number of important Lamas, was also a master in his own right. He is most commonly associated with a number of *gter ma* he himself revealed having received them as pure visions (*dag snang*). The most famous are *Rig 'dzin srog sgrub* in two volumes, *Sprin gyi thol glu* and *'Od gsal rdo rje snying po*.[17]

[17] For further details surrounding the discovery of these *gter ma* see *Lha btsun chen po'i gsang ba'i rnam thar*.

The former cycle was discovered in a vision received in Bkra shis sdings in which he was transported to Lha ri snying phug in northern Sikkim; this *gter ma* is particularly revered in Sikkim to this day. However, these teachings did not remain in isolation there and were introduced into Tibet, either during the life time of Lha btsun chen po or shortly after his death by a number of his key disciples. These three students; 'Phrin las lhun grub, Chos rgyal bstan 'dzin and Chos dbyings rang grol; maintained these traditions in Tibet by initiating two key figures of Tibetan political and religious history: the fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho and Gter bdag gling pa. *BGR* actually states that Lha btsun chen po himself gave initiations to the fifth Dalai Lama, and a meeting did indeed take place between these figures in 1651. What is important to remember here is that Lha btsun chen po was revered by the Dalai Lama as a lineage holder of the Byang gter and as an important *gter ston* in his own right and he figures largely within the Ca volume of the fifth Dalai Lama's collected works. Indeed the respect the Dalai Lama had for Lha btsun chen po lineage is reflected by the endowments made to the incarnation of Lha btsun chen po, which included the lands of the Zar region on the Tibet/Sikkim/Nepal borderlands.[18] Furthermore, the Tibetan government also gave Zar sprul sku (later the teacher of the 3rd Lha btsun sprul sku) the title of regent of the Lha btsun treasure tradition and was given control over Rdzogs chen in Dbus and Gtsang.[19] The Lha btsun treasure tradition was also maintained in Smin grol gling under Gter bdag gling pa.[20]

These later religio-political developments ensured the survival of Lha btsun chen po's *gter ma* cycles and the propagation of his lineage in Tibet to the extent that his teachings are still highly regarded and continues to be taught within the wider Rnying ma tradition and not just within Sikkim.[21] It is certainly possible that these later developments in the propagation of this tradition, and the privileged position

[18] There is some debate as to the precise location of Zar as was recently highlighted by Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2008: 11).

[19] JPKB: 31–33.

[20] JPKB: 127–129.

[21] Lha btsun chen po's teachings are today taught in Smin grol gling, which was re-built in Dehradun in India and in the late Penor Rinpoche's monastery in the South Indian Tibetan settlement of Bylakuppe. A number of years ago a child was discovered with special qualities, although it was undecided as to whom he was a reincarnation of. In 2006 a group of Sikkimese monks travelled to Penor Rinpoche's monastery (where the, now teenage, boy had been studying) and he was recognised as an incarnation of Lha btsun chen po. This apparently did not conflict with the fact that an incarnation

given to Lha btsun chen po and his *gter ma* cycles by the fifth Dalai Lama, may have contributed to his central place in Sikkimese historical narratives (for further explanations please see chapter seven). Yet, whilst his tradition was to benefit from a more favourable reception in Tibet than the lineage of Zhig po gling pa, influential in the development of the Mnga' bdag tradition in Sikkim (see chapter four), we have to remember that he did flee Tibet for some reason. In addition to this his religious upbringing in the Rnying ma traditions was not too dissimilar from his contemporary in Sikkim: Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin.

1.2. *Lha btsun chen po in Sikkim*

In order to understand some of the reasons for Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med's departure to Sikkim, it may be best to read what he himself has written about it. For this reason this section starts with the opening folios from *LTLY*.

> (426) Furthermore, during the time of travelling from the eastern region of Kong yul, and being saddened, generally, by what is equal to the degeneration period resulting from the general impermanent and changing nature of all time. And particularly (427) there arose misunderstanding between Dbyings pa chen mo [an old term meaning ministers and regents] and those such as the Sne gdong gong ma,[22] Bkra shis rtse and the brothers of the Lord of the northern Rba clan. Furthermore, to whomsoever I spoke, hearing only words of suffering and pain and so I have realised and understood the prophecies, by other eminent masters, that it is necessary for sentient beings of the *dus mtha* to flee to the hidden lands.
>
> In *The sutra of the royal prophesies*, which comes from the very mouth of our teacher the son of king Suddhodana, it states the following. "Listen Shariputra! After my parinirvana a royal lineage, which is like a lamp, shall arise seven times. After that the end will come after a period of 5000 years and (428) my four disciples[23] must go to four places which are the forests, the island of the external ocean, the source of the essence of meaning rivers and the place of the mountain called Dan tig. They must go to the island of the south-western places and also all the places of

had already been discovered 70 years ago in the person of Yang thang Rinpoche (who is still alive).

[22] Sne gdong was the seat of the Phag mo gru pa, which ruled in Central Tibet after the decline of the Sa skya—Yuan period. The Phag mo gru itself gave way to the Rin spung family (to whom they were related).

[23] This echoes references to the prophecy of the *rnal 'byor mched bzhi*.

> the doctrine of the Buddha such as Khotan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Uddiyana and India. Since at the end of time the Buddha Dharma will flourish in the northern snowy land [i.e. Tibet]. That is according to the prophecy by rigs gsum mgon po. At the end of 500 years all the people of Tibet must go to the border regions. They should flee to the forest." Thus it is prophesised! Thus it is explained!
>
> Furthermore prophecies have been uttered from the very mouth of 'Ja' tshon snying po, who is the second Rdo rje chang and who is the embodiment of all Buddhas, "Now proceed towards the hidden land and the border of Lho mon [i.e. Bhutan].[24] Although the Buddha taught heaps of teachings of all the Buddhas to sentient beings afflicted with bad karma, it is not possible to stop karma, which is without deception. Now the great powerful army from Mongolia is coming quickly and since the sentient beings of the *Dus mtha* will sink in the quagmire of suffering, those sons, (429) disciples, benefactors and persons affectionately connected must abandon attachment and must go towards the direction of the peaceful hidden land." Thus, which has been persistently commanded [by 'Ja' tshon rnying po] has been clearly understood in my mind (LTLY: 426 line 1–429 line 1).

As we can see from these opening passages Lha btsun chen po explains his reasons for leaving Tibet. These are articulated as a revelation, in which he assesses the prevailing political climate in Tibet (especially Kong po) and understanding these conditions as the signs predicted in Buddhist literature regarding the coming of the end times or *dus mtha*. He further states that when the *dus mtha* arises one, in accordance with the prophetical traditions, should flee to the border regions and hidden lands.[25] Yet he also alludes to a period of suffering and possibly even hostility. Whilst there is no specific evidence of individual persecution, the political climate in Tibet during the late 1630s and early 1640s was a period of extreme upheaval, both in terms of political organisation and religious participation, and it is probably this wider socio-political climate that he is referring to. Indeed he explicitly states there being political difficulties during this time "There arose misunderstanding between Dbyings pa chen mo and those such as the Sne gdong gong ma, Bkra shis rtse and the brother of the Lord of the northern Rba clan."

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[24] Sikkim is obviously classed within the greater territory of Lho mon which has generally been identified as the later state of Bhutan. It therefore, seems that before the establishment of the two Himalayan states of Sikkim and Bhutan the region to the south of Tibet was generally referred to as Lho mon.

[25] This alludes to one of the principal functions of a hidden land discussed in the introduction to this book.

As well as this wider political context one of his main teachers, 'Ja' tshon snying po—who we have encountered above, actually directed him to go towards the hidden lands. Indeed according to Lha btsun chen po, 'Ja' tshon snying po actually warns him of the approach of the "great powerful army from Mongolia" and urges him and his followers to abandon any attachments and flee to the safety of Sikkim. Thus the link between the *dus mtha* and the changing political situation in central Tibet is explicitly identified. This is important for early Sikkim for two reasons. Firstly, it implies that at the time Lha btsun chen po fled Tibet, he, his teachers or his religious traditions were under threat (or they perceived a possible threat) from the change in the balance of power in central Tibet and the arrival of the "powerful Mongolian army". Secondly, if this was the case, it implies the privileged position of Lha btsun chen po's *gter ma* cycles and the political patronage given to his lineage was a later development, occurring after the defeat of Gtsang, the consolidation of the Dge lugs pa state (post 1642), the coming of age of the Dalai Lama and his liberal attitude towards the Rnying ma traditions.

Indeed it was in this consolidation period of Central Tibet by forces loyal to the Dalai Lama and after the establishment of Dge lugs pa dominance in Lhasa in 1642, that Lha btsun chen po left for Sikkim. In chapter one it was shown that according to the traditional narrative Lha btsun chen po arrived in Sikkim and that during 1642 was involved in the enthronement of the first Sikkimese Chos rgyal (see Chapter two). It was also noted in that section of chapter two that there appeared to be a chronological discrepancy between the dates that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin (1642) and Lha btsun chen po arrived in Sikkim (1646). This chronological problem was also briefly discussed in chapter three (pp. 88–89) with regards to the date given in *LSG* for the coronation of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal.

The only specific date we are given in the writings of Lha btsun chen po is found in *LTLY* (437.6–438.1): in which the date of the tenth day of the fifth month of the Fire Rat (1636) is noted as the date for a tantric feast, which accompanied the consecration and purification rituals in Shal ri. The text then mentions the date of the fifteenth day of the seventh month as the time he actually sets forth on his journey to Sikkim.[26] Since there is no year given it is possible to assume that

[26] *LTLY*: 508.1. *De nas hor zla bdun pa'i tshes bco lnga la/ de nyid nas legs par chas te/.*

Lha btsun chen po is still referring to the same year. The next date is the tenth day of the ninth month[27] and it is shortly after this date that Lha btsun chen po meets with Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin at the middle door to the *sbas yul*.[28] Finally he arrives in the Meadows of Phu chu dkar lha in Sikkim.[29] The next date is the tenth month (still presumably the same year as earlier) and it is this passage that is of some importance for the study of Sikkim and so shall be translated below.

> (556) Then on the first day of dkar phyog dga' ba[30] of the tenth month having arrived at Nor bu sgang, which is the naval of the treasure holder of the holy land of 'Bras mo gshong. [I] stayed in the house of the highest Mantra holder Mthu stobs dbang po, who is from the clan which descends from the lineage of Dkon mchog 'byung gnas of Lang gro [a minister during the reign of Khri srong lde btsan] who himself was one of the main disciples of Guru Padmasambhava. From those fathers and mothers, like Nor 'dzin Tse ring bu 'khrid, vast offering feast were arranged for a number of days to all the assembled Yogin brothers. With the force of good karmic tendencies [resulting] from previous experiences, at that time, the prayers made in a previous time came to fruition.
>
> Chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, the master of this extensive country, which is the heavenly realm of Guru Rinpoche,[31] father and son, and his subjects and ministers, the activity field of the perfect eon, flawlessly and spontaneously arose. Having gone and taken many kinds of wealth including precious objects, at that time the Chos rgyal brought innumerable offerings such as the essential objects as well as many other priceless things. (557) Thus the good external and internal Omens were arranged. Then again, being endowed with the heroic consecration of the seven ritual objects of political power, as well as the eight auspicious objects and signs and so forth; was enthroned as the great benefactor of the Buddhist teachings. Then I (Lha btsun chen po) met with Bkra shis rnam rgyal dpal bzang po,[32] who is the descendant of the lineage of the *Dharmarāja* Khri srong lde'u btsan, and The Lord of Dharma Kaḥ thog kun tu bzang po,[33] who, from a long time, has stepped foot in the outer

[27] Ibid: 548.1. *De nas hor zla dgu pa'i tshes bcu'i nyin.*

[28] Ibid: 550.6. *De nas bar sgo sge la sman bzang du/ mnga' bdag chos kyi rgyal po khri srong rje'i gdung las rim par byon ba'i khams gsum 'gro ba'i mgon po phun tshogs rig 'dzin mjal/* Note that in the later histories this meeting is said to have occurred between Lha btsun chen po and Kaḥ thog kun tu bzang po.

[29] Ibid: 552.6. *De nas rgyal ba'i gnas chen 'bras mo gshong gi phu chu dkar lha'i spang gshongs du sleb/.*

[30] This term is the name given to a day in the astrological calendar.

[31] That is dpal [mo] ri.

[32] This is Byams pa bstan 'dzin, author of NGR and son of Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin.

[33] This is the other member of the three Lamas responsible for the enthronement of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. Unfortunately very little evidence exists regarding this figure's life and activities in Sikkim.

> and inner parts of this great sacred land. And with great kindness *bzhas len* was made abundant. (LTLY: 556–557)

Lha btsun chen po then makes a poetical digression before returning to autobiographical information. At this point he discusses Bkra shis sdings.

> Page 562.1[34] The throne of the incarnated Kings and ministers of a previous era is called Brag dkar bkra shis sdings. Stories and praise of which is as famous as the treasure location of the wish fulfilling jewels which was offered to the king Indrabodhi by the beautiful daughter of the king of the Nāgās and which elegant accounts have spread in the three lands. At that time, even I myself was very much convinced of that and to the mountain dwelling holders of this land, which is the royalty of the celestial realms, explained thoroughly the accounts such as the directions and locations of the inner and outer doors and the shape of the outer aspect of this land.
>
> I investigated the gnas yig[s]: *Gsal byed lde mig*, *Yang byang*, and *Dgongs pa'i gnas yig* [guidebook] that were concealed by Guru Padmasambhava for the benefit of all future sentient beings. According to the secret aspect, having made an investigation and supplications to the assembly of those bound by oath to the three roots, I discovered a small thing which was that the Mountain king [of this land], which is known in the language of Lho mon as Seng gtam. Chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and the retinue of ministers thoroughly provided all the supplies for the journey and so on the first day of the eleventh month of the end of Fire Dog year [I] proceeded towards the summit of that mountain.

From the passages above we can see that the next date to appear is the tenth month. It was during this time (the year is not given) that Lha btsun chen po arrives in Nor bu sgang, which is in the Yog bsam valley, and at that time (presumably) first meets with the Chos rgyal of Sikkim Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. Assuming this text follows a chronological order the Chos rgyal is then *again* given the ritual objects of the *cakravārtin* and "enthroned as the greatest patron of the Buddhist teachings". The next date that appears in this text is the first day of the eleventh month of the Fire Dog year (which equates with the end of December 1646 or early January 1647), at which time Lha btsun chen po arrives near the summit of Seng gtam. As far as the chronology of this text is concerned we are faced with a problem regarding the arrival of Lha btsun chen po in Sikkim. As has been shown above the

[34] Between 557 and 562.1 there is an extensive poetical passage which I have chosen to omit here.

first date of significance was the date of the fifth month of the Fire Rat year, or 1636 (*LTLY*: 438), the text then follows a pattern of highlighting a month by month account of his activities until the year of the Fire Dog year is encountered (in the passage quoted above).

This is particularly important when we come to the references for the Seventh (508) and the Ninth months (548). In the latter case, it is the date for Lha btsun chen po's first meeting with Phun tshogs rig 'dzin at the outer door to Sikkim and we know from the previous chapter that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin preceded the arrival of Lha btsun chen po in Sikkim by a number of years. The confusion surrounding these dates are further compounded by the fact that according to *LTLY* Lha btsun chen po set out for Sikkim on the 13th day of the fifth month 1636 (439), providing we read the date on the preceding page as Fire Rat (438). Thus the entire travel to Sikkim took Lha btsun chen po at least 10 years, which even in the seventeenth century is a very long time and thus highly unlikely. On this basis alone we may have sufficient doubt to question the accuracy of the Fire Rat date reference in *LTLY*. Perhaps, then, a scribal error may have been introduced to the text at an earlier stage, where *me byi* was a mistake for *me khyi*. This may not be as farfetched as it first appears as in certain spoken dialects *byi* and *khyi* can be pronounced quite similarly and so if the text was being dictated it is possible to conceive that an error could have been introduced in that way.[35] That error could then have been reproduced during the time the block prints were commissioned.

Indeed it appears that this was indeed the case as Dudjom Rinpoche in his seminal work *Rnying ma'i chos 'byung*, notes that the arrival of Lha btsun chen po to Sikkim occurred in 1646 (1991: 820) a point I myself have noted earlier (Mullard 2003: 13). If the reader is not convinced by this argument, I would like to direct him to an anomaly in the text itself. In the Tibetan passage above regarding the meeting between Lha btsun chen po and the Chos rgyal of Sikkim and the

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[35] For a detailed description of how scribal errors creep into Tibetan texts see Beyer (1993: 177–181). In this passage he details how certain scribal errors are likely to be left uncorrected as the method of checking and editing Tibetan texts is for another person to read the original text to the scribe. In such a case it can be seen how khyi pronounced by a reader from eastern Tibet could be confused as byi by a scribe from central Tibet or for that matter Sikkim. In the Sikkimese dialect some words spelt ba ya btags are pronounced *pya*, byi, however, is an exception to that rule as that word is pronounced conventionally. Of course it is difficult to assume that the pronunciation now in vogue in Sikkim has remained unchanged since the seventeenth century.

subsequent enthronement ceremony (*LTLY*: 556–557). In that passage we come across the phrase *chos kyi rgyal po phun tshogs rnam rgyal yab sras blon 'khor dang bcas pa*, which I translated as "Chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal…father and son, and his subjects and ministers". Now if we focus on the term *yab sras*, which has a variety of meanings such as "master and disciple", it has the literal meaning of "father and son" which is how it has been chosen to be translated in this passage. To who does this *yab sras* refer? In all likelihood it applies to Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and his son, the future Chos rgyal of Sikkim. In chapter two *LSG* clearly states the year in which Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's son, Bstan srung rnam rgyal, was born, which was 1646. So for Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's son to be present at the enthronement event, it must have happened either during or after 1646. On the basis of this evidence it appears that Lha btsun chen po departed Tibet in the fifth month of 1646 (Fire Dog year) and arrived in Sikkim in the tenth month of the same year and it was around this time that he met the first Sikkimese Chos rgyal in Yog bsam nor bu sgang, where he offered him the ritual ornaments of the *cakravātin*.

By clarifying this date another chronological problem is raised. In chapter two we discovered that according to *LSG* Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was enthroned as the Chos rgyal of Sikkim in 1642. However, in chapter three *NGR* informed us that the coronation, involving Phun tshogs rig 'dzin as the spiritual preceptor happened in 1644, shortly after the construction of the Dmar po lha khang. Now we have discovered that Lha btsun chen po only arrived in Sikkim towards the end of 1646. If we accept the accuracy of all those dates it is difficult to determine the start of the Rnam rgyal dynasty, providing we believe that the start of the dynasty was marked by the official coronation of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, which given the information regarding the establishment of 'state-like' structures prior to 1642 discussed in chapter three is doubtful (see page 82).

I shall return to this dilemma in the next section, for the moment it is enough to recognise that the chronological differences, within texts written during the seventeenth century, exists and that this may imply a completely different set of circumstances and events than those noted in the traditional narratives of chapter two. Indeed what we have also learned is that, whatever the enthronement of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal may mean, it is clear that Lha btsun chen po was not present during the 'enthronement' conducted by Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin and it is similarly clear that Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was not present

during Lha btsun chen po's 'enthronement' of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal (at least as far as *LTLY* is concerned). Though his son, Byams pa bstan 'dzin, was and it is the relationship between Byams pa bstan 'dzin and Lha btsun chen po that I will turn to now.

It is an anomaly of *LTLY* that Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin is only mentioned once, yet pages are devoted to his son Byams pa bstan 'dzin, who Lha btsun chen po refers to by his *gter ma* initiation name of Bkra shis rnam rgyal.[36] Lha btsun chen po declares that Bkra shis rnam rgyal is the true embodiment of the system of *lugs gnyis* because not only is his earthly existence descended from the line of the Tibetan emperors but also his religious lineage is traced to primordial emptiness through his association of being a Bodhisattva of the highest level (*LTLY*: 573–574). In this passage Lha btsun chen po urges him to occupy the *vajra* throne and take hold of the *vajra* of 'Bras mo gshong [sic]. This refers to two separate instructions. Firstly Lha btsun chen po is requesting Byams pa bstan 'dzin to take possession of Bkra shis sdings, the sacred navel of Sikkim, which is considered as the *vajra* throne of Guru Rinpoche.[37] Secondly, Lha btsun chen po's request for him to take hold of the *vajra* of Sikkim is synonymous with taking control of the religious affairs of Sikkim. Indeed this may refer to what Ehrhard (2005: 20) described as a meeting between the Sikkimese king Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and Phun tshogs rig 'dzin in which Byams pa bstan 'dzin was named as the successor to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin as royal preceptor. This, according to Ehrhard, occurred in 1651 prior to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's journey to Mustang.

LTLY continues with a eulogy to Byams pa bstan 'dzin's qualities as a man of supreme knowledge endowed with the "armour of forbearance and morality" and equates him to Mañjuśri who is the only one who can show the path between vice and virtue. The passage (575–578) then concludes with Lha btsun chen po giving an oral instruction to Byams pa bstan 'dzin, regarding the true impermanent nature of all phenomena, compassion, and meditation on Rdzogs chen. Lha btsun

[36] In *NGR*: 587 Byams pa bstan 'dzin notes that he was given the initiation name of Bkra shis rnam rgyal by Lha btsun chen po. *Lha btsun kun bzang rnam rgyal gyis bkra shis mnga' gsol gyi mtshan rgyal sras bkra shis rnam rgyal dpal bzang po'i lde zhes so*. "Lha btsun Kun bzang rnam rgyal called [me] the auspicious empowerment name of the spiritual heir bkra shis rnam rgyal dpal bzang po'i lde".

[37] Numerous examples of this can be found in the *gnas yig* of 'Bras mo ljongs.

chen po is also informing him not to grasp to life and status but to act without the prejudices of samsaric life.

These passages indicate that Lha btsun chen po held Byams pa bstan 'dzin in high regard. Indeed the privileged position Byams pa bstan 'dzin is given in *LTLY* is representative of his position as the spiritual successor to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, the spiritual preceptor to the Sikkimese Chos rgyal; Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. So although, *LTLY* does not specifically declare Phun tshogs rig 'dzin as the primary religious figure in Sikkim during this period, Lha btsun chen po's respect for this master and his son Byams pa bstan 'dzin is indicative of this family's higher status, as royal preceptors, in early Sikkim.

Lha btsun chen po was in all likelihood a relatively minor, though still important, religious figure in Sikkim, when compared to Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin. From all accounts he was a less prolific builder of religious establishments and played a smaller role in the politics of the region. There is also an oral narrative which states that he fell out with the political powers in Sikkim. According to one local tradition (that of the Stod lung [also: Do lung] family) Lha btsun chen po came under pressure from the Sikkimese Chos rgyal and Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin and fled (ostensibly for a retreat) to the area around Stod lung [Do lung] in the northern Sikkimese district of Rdzong dgu. Here, it is said, he hid a number of relics and texts, which were later housed by a subsequent incarnation in a monastery currently under the control of the Stod lung family.[38] It is unclear whether these items were in fact deposited by Lha btsun chen po himself or were more likely brought from western Sikkim during the Gorkha invasion of 1788. It has even been stated that Lha btsun chen po was poisoned by a member of the Mnga' bdag family (see Lha tshe ring 2006: 522), and although this assertion seems unlikely it has neither been confirmed nor disproved. Whatever the truth of these narratives may be it is not possible to fully demote Lha btsun chen po to the position of an insignificant figure in Sikkimese history. Yet the evidence

[38] Indeed the monastery at Stod lung or Do lung was actually established by Kun bzang 'jigs med, the fourth Lha btsun sprul sku (Ehrhard 2008: 7). In the same article, Ehrhard states that the items belonging to Lha btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med were actually transferred from western Sikkim to Do lung in 1816. However, it seems more likely that, if they were not brought to Do lung during Lha btsun chen po's life, the articles would have been brought to Do lung during the earlier Gorkha invasion of 1788. As it was during this war that western Sikkim fell under the control of the Gorkhas and not the war or 1816.

does suggest that he was less important than Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin was for the formation of Sikkim. That he was less significant does not mean he was insignificant, as he was certainly an important figure in early Sikkim. This is attested to by his own writings which indicate that he did play a role in the formation of a number of sacred sites in Sikkim, and received minor royal patronage for his activities. And although he was not the primary Lama of the traditional narratives, he was still a relatively important Lama in Sikkim. Indeed in Lha btsun chen po's own writings we encounter a number of references to key figures in early Sikkim.

For example Lha btsun chen po acts as the spiritual advisor to one of the wives of the Chos rgyal, Lha lcam ye she dbang mo and their daughter Tshe ring lha mdzes. Both women took vows of renunciation (*LTLY*: 578.3–5) and received teachings from Lha btsun chen po, on basic concepts like the importance of abandoning pride and dualistic thought (*LTLY*: 582). He also instructs these two princesses to remain in Brag dkar bkra shis sdings and meditate on Rdzogs chen and to view the sacred mountains of Sikkim, which is like the wish fulfilling jewel and free from the defilements of Mongolian barbarians.[39] Lha btsun chen po was also present during the ceremony where the Sikkimese Chos rgyal (amongst others) took the eight vows of the layman and the vows of a Bodhisattva.[40]

Lha btsun chen po was also asked to give discourses by Lha dbang bkra shis (*LTLY*: 607–608), who we have already encountered in chapter three. Lha dbang bkra shis was quite an influential figure in early Sikkim and was involved with the subjugation of Bkra shis 'dzoms in western Sikkim and after his alliance with Phun tshogs rnam rgyal oversaw the construction of Rab brtan rtse palace. Indeed it was with the help of Lha dbang bkra shis that Lha btsun chen po established a religious site in the region of Bkra shis 'dzoms. Today the temple still remains (see figure 3.2 on page 66) and there is an oral history of this region, which seems to confirm this close relationship between Lha

[39] *Dam nyams sdig can hor sog mtha' mi yis/ ma slad rin chen 'dod rgu'i gshong gling 'dir/ na chung kun nas dga' ba'i ri rnams gzigs/* (LTLY: 581.6). Note here the use of Mongolians as a synonym for those who act against the dharma.

[40] *De'i tshe mi'i dbang po phun tshogs rnam rgyal la sogs pa'i skal ldan gyi skyes bu 'ga' la bsnyen gnas yan lag brgyad pa'i dus khrims dang byang chub sems dpa' sdom pa yang phog cing* (LTLY: 583.4–5).

dbang bkra shis and Lha btsun chen po.[41] But more important than this he was requested by Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and the monastic community to establish a centre for the *Saṅgha*.[42] He duly built the monastery (which was presumably funded by the Chos rgyal) and performed the consecration rituals on the 25th day of the second month of the Fire pig year (1647).[43] This is Gsang sngags rdo rje gdan monastery, which is known in Sikkim simply as Sgrub sde and is the same monastery detailed in the national narratives of chapter two. He also constructed one of the most important Stupas in Sikkim: Mchod rten mthong ba rang grol, in Bkra shis sdings. The fact that this important site was constructed in the vicinity of Bkra shis sdings monastery, itself built by Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin, is indicative of the important position of Lha btsun chen po in early Sikkim and may also account for Mnga' bdag hostility towards him.[44] That particular stupa, which was the subject of a previous article (Mullard 2003a), was particularly important for the religious tradition of Lha btsun chen po. Furthermore, as it was constructed to honour his own teacher 'Ja' tshon snying po, being built shortly after his death in 1656, it also represents a focus for his teachings, again, a possible threat to the position of the Mnga' bdag family.

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[41] I visited this area on a number of occasions and spent around a week exploring the surrounding region. In conversations with a number of the inhabitants (who are Lepcha), I was told the story of how a Sikkimese lord had settled the area and brought the ancestors of the current inhabitants from Yog bsam, where they built the current lha khang and a rdzong, which no longer exists. They showed me the ruins of the rdzong and told me that Lha btsun chen po had himself came here to consecrate the lha khang and a number of monks. Bkra shis 'dzoms is a three hour walk from Zil gnon (and the nearest road) and a two hour walk from Sgrub sde monastery (itself an hour walk from Yog bsam).

[42] *de'i tshe chos rgyal phun tshogs rnam rgyal dang grwa rigs rnams kyi mgrin gcig tu/ bla ma rin po che lags/ sngon gyi dus su ni gnas gcig tu nges pa med pa'i jo bo bka' gdams pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen lha bu'am/ mi la/ kha rag_lo rgod lha bu'i rnam thar [651] kho nas dus 'da' ba'i ngang nas yangs ba'i rgyal khams gang dang gang du mchog dman bar ma dang bcas pa'i gdul bya rnams smin grol gyi lam phyin ci la log par bkod bar mdzad pa ni bka' drin che lags/ da ni gu ru rin po ches kyang snyigs dus kyi 'gro ba rnams sbas pa'i yul la song cig pa'i bka' chem nan ltar du gnang 'dug pa ltar/ da lam gnas chen 'di lta bur rang cag rnams kyi gdan sa Sgrub sde zhig 'debs par cis kyang gsol ba 'debs so/ zhes yang yang du bskul ba dang* (LTLY: 650.5–651.3).

[43] *Hor zla gnyis pa'i nyer lnga la rab tu gnas ba dad bcas bgyis* (*LTLY*: 651).

[44] This stupa continues to be a focus for worship. During the yearly Bum chu festival held on the fifteenth day of the Tibetan New Year, pilgrims make offerings to this Stupa and circumambulate around it. It figures largely in the official program and has become incorporated into a ritual which is entirely focused on Zhig po gling pa and the Mnga' bdag tradition.

This was perhaps one of Lha btsun chen po's greatest achievements in Sikkim: the introduction of a number of key religious traditions. He was, if only by his own admission, the first lama to introduce the Tibetan medical system into Sikkim, as well as 'Ja' tshon snying po's entire teaching cycle on "self-liberation through purification" (*KZNT*: 132), not to mention his own *gter ma* cycles and his treatises on Rdzogs chen. Despite these accomplishments he never fully received recognition during his own lifetime, caused, in part, by the privileged position of Mnga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin.

2. The "Coronation" Conundrum

In this and the previous two chapters, there has been a recurrent issue which poses a serious problem or 'conundrum' for establishing the chronology of early Sikkim: the date of the enthronement of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as the Chos rgyal of Sikkim. In part this 'conundrum' is created by two points. Firstly the need to create a single point in time, from which historians (or Sikkimese nationalists) can identify the start of the Rnam rgyal dynasty. And, secondly, by fixing this event in time it is possible to extrapolate, from the date the Rnam rgyal dynasty was formed, the construction of the Sikkimese state. It is for these reasons that the date of the 'coronation' of the first Sikkimese king is so important. However, in reality, the importance of the date of the coronation, or even the coronation itself (whenever it may have occurred) can be attributed to what we as historians or interested parties believe the event represents and not what it meant in seventeenth century Sikkim.

As through the lens of hindsight and preconceived notions of what a state or nation is, a teleology can be created to recognise an event that occurred in the past and apply meaning to it that we, as people living in the 'modern' era, can understand as a 'State forming' event. Indeed it may be the case that a 'royal' dynasty is created before a State exists, or *vice versa*: a State exists prior to the construction of the 'royal' dynasty, as was the case with Rome prior to the establishment of a hereditary line of Emperors. It may also be the case that the event that we 'recognise' as a coronation may in fact be a ritual quite dissimilar to the coronation of European kings during the Middle Ages; events which marked the start of a reign and added legitimacy through the use of regal paraphernalia, processions or any other ritual

as symbols of power and the confirmation of an individual to hold the authority to use that power.

In Sikkim the events that have been described in this and the previous two chapters do share some characteristics with a 'coronation' in as far as they involved the use of symbols that represent the authority invested in Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. In this case they are the eight auspicious signs, the seven symbols of the *cakravātin* and most likely a throne. But this is where the similarity ends. For European monarchs were, generally only enthroned once at the start of their reign, whereas, if we accept the dates and events recounted in the three sources of this and the previous two chapters, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was involved in this ritual at least three times.

The two accounts that provide the most detail are those contained within *NGR* and *LTLY* respectively. In both those accounts Phun tshogs rnam rgyal is offered the eight auspicious symbols, the eight auspicious substances[45] and the seven possessions of a *cakravātin*.[46] The eight auspicious symbols and substances (formed using a variety of different objects) were, according to Beer (2004: 171), used in pre-Buddhist India originally to represent symbols of royalty and, like the case of the Sikkimese king, were used during certain royal ceremonies including investiture and coronations. The eight auspicious symbols first appeared in Buddhism when they were offered to the Buddha by the gods after he attained enlightenment (Beer 2004: 171). The seven possessions of the *cakravātin* were, as Beer states (2004: 161), offered to 'universal kings' as part of a ceremony involving the anointing of the individual with water taken from lakes or oceans from the four directions of the monarch's realm. This is similar to tantric initiations where an initiate is sprinkled with water from five vases placed at each

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[45] The eight auspicious symbols are: the lotus, the endless knot, the golden fishes, the parasol, the victory banner, the golden treasure vase, the conch shell, and the wheel. The eight auspicious substances are: the mirror, medicine, curds, durva grass, the bilva fruit, the right spiraling conch, vermillion powder, and mustard seed.

[46] Beer (2004: 161) describes three sets of seven objects. The primary group includes: a wheel, jewel (which represent a monarchs spiritual and temporal authority), horse, elephant (which are his speed and strength and his royal vehicles), queen, minister and general (which are a "trinity of love, wisdom and power"). The auxiliary group includes: the sword, nāgā skin, the throne, the robes, the boots, the royal palace and the palace gardens. These represent the "material inheritance or attributes of the *cakravātin*". The final group of seven are the royal insignia or emblems and include: the rhinoceros horn, the square earrings of the minister, the round earrings of the queen, coral, the insignia of the general, elephant tusks and the triple-eyed gem.

of the cardinal directions and in the centre of the *maṇḍala* into which the disciple is being initiated.

In a way this similarity with tantric ritual mirrors the nature of the *cakravātin* who, by definition is a universal monarch in both the mundane and spiritual worlds. Indeed it is considered that only a Buddha or Bodhisattva, on account of being supremely endowed with knowledge and mastery of all phenomena, can be candidates for this position. Or put more simply the best monarch would be a Buddha or Bodhisattva in as far as they have command of all knowledge and can thus rule in accordance with that. A *cakravātin* as Snellgrove has explained (1959) is also closely tied to tantric ritual whereby an initiate actually becomes a *cakravātin* through the process of *maṇḍala* construction and visualisation. Through the process the initiate is guided through the stages of the practice, given the different ornaments of the divinity until he finally visualises himself as the deity (who is considered a *cakravātin*) of the *maṇḍala* being crowned by the supreme Buddha Mahavairocana (see Skorupski 2003: 25–78). Thus what we can identify here is two closely related ideas. Firstly, the enlightened mind as the most capable for worldly rule. Secondly, the enlightened mind having mastery over the universe.

So by giving the eight auspicious symbols and the seven objects of a *cakravātin* to Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, in affect his status as a ruler is enhanced. Phun tshogs rnam rgyal is thus elevated from being a petty ruler to being a universal monarch of both the temporal and spiritual realms and if these rituals followed the pattern of tantric initiations mentioned above those religious aspects may have taken on quite a visual and worldly meaning. Whilst this does not directly answer the question of why it was necessary to do this ceremony numerous times, it does provide some reason as to why this ritual was performed at all. However given that these events were replicated can we say with any clarity when the Rnam rgyal dynasty started (providing we believe the start of a dynasty must be marked with a coronation) and if so does this mark the beginning of the Sikkimese state? The answer to both of these questions must be a resolute no. From *LSG* it is noted that basic state administrative structures had been established prior to 1642, the date given in that source for the first enthronement of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. If we can accept that evidence as a historical probability, our interpretation of the enthronement rituals needs to be re-examined. This becomes even more important if we accept the other dates for enthronement rituals.

As far as the state formation of Sikkim is concerned, it is clear that it was a process of formation and as such it becomes difficult to distinguish a single point in time from which we can date the 'start' of the Sikkimese state. In the following chapter, this process of formation shall be described further, as the position of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal in Sikkim was not universally accepted. Indeed this highlights an interesting problem with defining a state; is a state formed when administrative structures are in place or when there is acceptance by the majority (whether obtained through consent or suppression) of those and other structures of power. In the definition of a state used in this book (i.e. a political entity which controls the population through a system of legitimate power or force—see pages 19–20), the state can only be considered formed once the use of power has been accepted as legitimate. In the following chapter it will be shown that this situation did not occur in the 1640s nor 1650s but much later in the 1660s.

Given that was the case it is almost certain that Phun tshogs rnam rgyal needed his position to be legitimate and so the enthronement rituals was one way he attempted to accomplish this. It is also interesting to note that these rituals took place in Yog bsam and not Bkra shis sdings (which has a higher status value according to the *gnas yig*[s] of Sikkim). The answer to that question has yet to be fully answered, though it may have something to do with the importance of Nor bu sgang in Yog bsam, for the inhabitants of that region. A survey of that site shows that there are numerous standing stones surrounding a central tree (of considerable age), this site is similar to a number of other Lepcha ritual sites such as Kabi in north Sikkim and La chu, in Nung Rdzong dgu. Considering that many of the inhabitants of Yog bsam were and still are Lepcha, it may be possible to assume that Nor bu sgang was a site of ritual importance. The practice, then, of holding the enthronement rituals there becomes a way of showing Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's political and spiritual control of the region and hence enhances the legitimacy of his rule. Indeed the assumption of ritual sites by invaders, new powers or new religious groups is a common theme in human history and it seems likely that the use of this site in Yog bsam, on a number of occasions, for enthronement rituals served the similar purpose of dominating the minds and the spiritual or ritual as well as the physical territory of the Lepchas in the region. The fact that this ritual was repeated seems to suggest the need for Phun tshogs rnam rgyal to constantly assert his power and seek legitimacy.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter a number of important areas for consideration have been brought to light. Beginning firstly with a contextual study of Lha btsun chen po's life, the religious traditions and his personal teachers were highlighted, giving us an understanding of the religious circles he moved in. Indeed we learned that he was primarily grounded in the various *gter ma* traditions of Sangs rgyas gling pa, Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can, Padma gling pa amongst many other notable traditions. He also had a number of religious connections with groups hostile to the changing political climate in Tibet. These included Lamas from the Karma kam tshang, 'Brug pa and Zhig po gling pa's lineage. From these spiritual origins it is easy to understand why Lha btsun chen po felt it was necessary for him to flee to Sikkim. Indeed, as shown above, it was clear that he himself understood the changing political climate of Tibet in religious terms and actually stated this as the key reason for his travels to Sikkim. He stated that his own teacher 'Ja' tshon snying po commanded him to depart for Sikkim, warning him of the impending destruction of Tibet at the hands of 'Mongolian armies'.

Following this survey of Lha btsun chen po's religious training the chapter shifted towards a discussion of his activities in Sikkim. Through this discussion it was made clear that he was quite an influential lama, being involved in a number of events which strengthened Buddhism in Sikkim and the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. However, it was also made clear that despite this influence he never had the opportunity to hold the position Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin enjoyed in early Sikkim. With this evidence at hand it is clear that the position of Lha btsun chen po in relation to that of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin remained secondary throughout his lifetime. Indeed lengthy sections of Lha btsun chen po's own writings confirm this and suggest a completely different series of events from those found in the narratives of chapter two.

The final section of this chapter returned to the 'conundrum' of the coronation of the first Sikkimese king and the chronological uncertainties surrounding this event. Recounting the brief descriptions of *LTLY* and *NGR* it was shown that, on at least two of the three occasions that this ritual took place; symbolic articles such as the seven possessions of the *cakravātin* were offered to Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. The symbolism of these symbols was discussed and an important question regarding the meaning of this ritual was raised. This question, which

asked whether we can extrapolate a meaning from this ritual which is synonymous with the meaning given to a coronation in a European setting, is important if we wish to use this ritual as a historical marker, as the 'moment' of the foundation of Sikkimese statehood. Ultimately this question underpins an analysis of the narratives of Sikkim, as ultimately they rest on the assumption that a single point in history marks the construction of Sikkimese statehood. It is this question that shall figure largely in the following chapter, in which the wider political context of early Sikkim shall be revisited, drawing on evidence found in the previous chapters and new sources.

CHAPTER SIX

REVISITING THE STATE AND POLITICAL FORMATION OF EARLY SIKKIM

In the previous chapter I addressed some of the key issues regarding the relationship between Lha btsun chen po and Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin, the two main religious figures of early Sikkim. In this chapter I will be turning my attention away from those religious questions towards the nature of state-like structures and political formations in early Sikkim. The question of the coronation 'conundrum' presented briefly in the past chapter is fundamental to our understanding of early Sikkimese state and political structures. Whilst the site and the event of the 'coronation' were of significant importance for extending political control and enhancing the legitimacy of the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, other sources from the 1650s and 1660s tell the historian a story that is not only different from the later narratives but also shakes our understanding of the importance of the 'coronation' event. They tell us of a different political climate of hostility, opposition, 'rebellion' and the re-assertion of authority. They also provide us with an insight into the organisation of territory and the nature of political control and subordinating structures of power. For these reasons this chapter will be largely devoted to these manuscripts and documents.

Following the pattern adopted in previous chapters, I shall begin with an introduction to the source, followed by a translation of the document and then a section devoted to explaining the significance of the material for early Sikkimese state and political structures. It should be remembered that, as mentioned in the introduction, this book is not aimed at revising early Sikkimese history, nor is it intended to produce a narrative of 'State formation', the dangers of which have been highlighted above (see introduction) by invoking the words of Charles Tilly: that states are formed not by intention or design but as by-products of a ruler's efforts to enhance his power, wealth and to ultimately survive (2006: 419). What is hoped is that this chapter will further highlight the problems we find in later historical narratives and perhaps illuminate the complex history of Sikkim. Indeed as mentioned earlier our historical understanding of Sikkim is only as good as

the sources we have to hand, and given that our knowledge is limited and hampered by lack of material all we can do is present the material that is available and hope that this may further our understanding, if only slightly, of early Sikkimese history.

1. The Lho Mon Gtsong gsum Agreement

The first document to be presented in this chapter is known locally as *The Lho Mon Gtsong gsum agreement* (hereafter *LMT*) on account of the fact that it records a significant agreement between the three ethnic communities of historical Sikkim: Lho pa (Tibeto-Sikkimese), Mon (Lepcha or *Rong kup*), and the Gtsong (Limbu).[1] This source is basically a legal document signed by representatives of these three communities acknowledging the supremacy of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as the head of a single political order in western Sikkim. It was signed in the Water Hare year (1663) and is written in the stylistic legal cursive script, used for official documents throughout the Tibetan world. Unfortunately the original document no longer survives and all we are left with is a large negative taken during the twentieth century. A translation of this document has been published by Ringu Tulku in R. Moktan (2004), though there are a number of errors in that translation which I hope I have rectified. Ringu Tulku (or the editor R. Moktan) also has reproduced a significant error in dating this document, which is given as 1641. This was, however, an Iron Snake year according to the Tibetan calendar and therefore cannot be the Water Hare year given in the original document. In order to clear all doubt regarding the date of the signing of this document I have reproduced the text in appendix VII. To avoid any further confusion I have inserted line numbers into both my reproduction of the Tibetan text in appendix VII and the translation here so that readers may be able to consult the original negative. I hope this will go some way towards clarifying any issues that may arise from the quotation of this document.

[1] The problems of identifying the Limbu as an ethnic group in Sikkim was recently articulated by George van Driem in a paper presented at a conference in 2008. In his paper he discussed the extent of Limbu settlements in Limbuwan, which incorporated areas of modern western Sikkim.

(1) Please take heed, Please observe, Please listen! From Dharmakāya Samanthabadra, who, from the beginning, was the protector [to] the root Guru [and] the highest dharma protectors, who have been bound by vow are requested to form a great assembly (2) and without body, speech or mind distracted elsewhere, arise in your wrathful form and observe [this event]; and with the Male and female dharma protectors and the personal deities of the father and son, the Mchod yon and the Chos rgyal are requested to (3) form a great assembly, without your body, speech or mind distracted elsewhere and having [appeared] in your wrathful form please observe [this event].

The glorious protector Māhākala, the supreme Ma ning nag po, (4) the protectors who have been motivated by the dharma and who possess the precious qualities of the Body, speech and mind; Ra hu la, the eight classes of gods and demons of the phenomenal world and without your body distracted elsewhere please observe [this event].

The Chos rgyal chen po, all his consorts, ministers and subjects to whom Guru Rinpoche gave his commands (5) and his retinue of the three classes of earthly gods [bdud btsan and klu], rdo rje shugs ldan, rdo rje dgra 'dul, pe har rgyal po, the rgyal po of recent and ancient times and the eight classes of violent deities being assembled together, without body speech or mind (6) distracted elsewhere appear in wrathful form and please observe [this event].

The great treasure holder of this supreme hidden land, Mdzod lnga stag rtse, Thang lha, Ga bur Gang btsan, the twelve local goddesses,[2] the female possessor (7) bdud lcam dral, the *sri* in this [land], the protectoress of the teachings: Ekajati, the female guardians, the guardians of the middle valley [of] Dpa' bo hūṃ ri[3] and the hundred thousand armies of Lha, btsan, bdud and klu (8) may also appear in their wrathful form and without their body speech or mind distracted elsewhere, please observe [this event].

The guardian deities of Sgrub sde gsang sngags rdo rje ldan[4] holding the lineage of Rdzogs pa chen po, (9) the armies of bdud, btsan and klu residing in the mountains, valleys, trees rocks, lands and pastures, The guardian deities and treasure holders of Theg chog yang rtse, Padma yang rtse, Rab ldan rtse [sic], Brag dkar bkra shis sdings and so forth (10) should assemble together, in this hidden land of Guru Rinpoche, in their wrathful forms and observe [this event].

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[2] Recte: *Brtan ma bcu gnyis*. These are the twelve female deities subjugated by Padmakara and correspond to the twelve months of the Tibetan calendar. They are also known as the twelve dakini who protect the dharma.

[3] This is located to the north of Zil gnon (see map of areas of western Sikkim under Phun tshogs rnam rgyal on page 65 for details).

[4] This is a monastery in Yog bsam, built by Lha btsun chen po in the 1640s. See previous chapter for details.

All the deities and guardians worshipped by us the people of four parts of Bkra shis steng kha, and all the districts [of this land such as] 'Bar spungs, (11) Ling dam, and the protector deities and patrons of the religions of the Gtsong and Mon without their minds distracted elsewhere, please observe [this event].

Henceforth conforming to the command of his majesty, the humble (12) ministers and leaders of Lho, Mon and Gtsong have met here with the desire for unification and solidarity and hereby make the statement that there shall not be separate governments of Lho, Mon or Gtsong.

During the previous Mon pa war (13) [people] from all the different ethnic groups intentionally rebelled and this has been remembered. Henceforth from this year of the Water Hare year take hold [of this order] and in accordance with the orders of the Lord the Chos rgyal [lit. The lord who is the aggregates of the mchod yon, father and son] laid down the affirmation and grasped the solution [unclear text] and so the humble and dedicated minister Dag shar [affixed his] seal.

The eight clans of the Tibeto-Sikkimese (14) and the [people] of the Lho Mon and Gtsong will have one destiny without separate governments. And so great benefits will come to those people who are united.

If [the Lho Mon and Gtsong cause] misery from the exterior to come within and the unregistered enemies, (15) who do not abide by this agreement, cause the disturbance of the exterior to come into Sikkim and oppose the dharma etc the Lho Mon Gtsong will act from the point of view of a single government. The actual deities [as mentioned above] will see the truth (16) and appear in their wrathful form and shout Hūṃ phaṭ[5] and they will see, and they are requested to eat the flesh, blood and heart etc without delaying for a year, month or day and cause them to be overcome with madness. (17) Kha ram Kha yi!

The Lho Mon Gtsong, who are without separate government, should respect what is contained within this document and respect the deities mentioned in accordance with the command. (18) [If] the humble ministers fulfil this statement and [act] in accordance with the wishes and intent of the Chos rgyal and serve whatever arises (whether peaceful, physical or war) and (19) also fully serve in accordance to the single unity [of this land], whenever need arises; The above mentioned deities will see this and are requested to bestow upon those longevity, wealth and glorious merit [i.e. those who fulfil the obligations of this agreement] like the waxing moon.

(20) In particular if this agreement is broken it will be done like this. Having followed the unofficial rules [i.e. rules which are not sanctioned by the government], if anyone from the Lho Mon or Gtsong follow the illegal laws or act in this way, whoever they are (21) will, if they have the ability to pay three measures of gold to the legal official, be released from

[5] This is a mantra which has the power to destroy an enemy.

the violation, otherwise the punishment [for breaking this law] is death or [in the case of] small [violations] physical torture.[6] With no doubt at all, each individual must keep this in their mind!

The representatives have signed and affixed their seals in accordance with this agreement.

(22) The seal of the Sikkimese Minister Gra shar [Tibeto-Sikkimese]; The seal of the leader of Bkra shis steng kha, the chamberlain [Gron][7] Bde chen rnam rgyal [probably Tibeto-Sikkimese though the people of Bkra shis steng kha are in fact Lepcha]; The seal of the leader, the representative [Gron mi][8] Thar 'thing [sic probably mthing and so this individual is probably Lepcha] of 'Bar spung; The seal of the leader the representative, Rdo leg. (23) The seal of Bstan chos from Ling dam [Tibeto-Sikkimese], the seal of the representative Chos 'grug [sic]; The seal of the representative 'Gu ru [sic], from 'Grang sdod; The seal of Snag po the representative of Bod 'grong; The seal of 'Bang sha hi from the Gtsong shu spu [Limbu clan name]; The seal of the Limbu 'Yug shugs.

(24) The seal of Mo nang; The seal of Brtsa ltas; The seal of Sig brtse; The seal of Spo ging; The seal of Ma brtse rta; The seal of La 'thung; The seal of Tha pha Ku 'dis [Limbu]; The seal of the Sde[9] she hang [Limbu]; The seal of Mig yam; The seal of A dzam [probably Lepcha]; The seal of Mo ldan pa [Lepcha]; The seal of Pad kha. (25)The seal of 'Bo lo 'bir [Limbu]; The seal of Rta sa[10] A rgod of Ra thong chu; The seal of Rta sa Shu phang of Ring 'bigs chung [sic. Should read chu]; The seal of Rta pa [sic] mgon sba bus, who was summoned from Ga lad chung [sic]; (26) The seal of Pad lo.[11]

Thus on the [x] day of the [x] month of the water hare year, In the marvellous new house of Sikkim[12] [this agreement] was made.[13]

This document, which is in essence a record of oaths of loyalty to the first Sikkimese Chos rgyal, provides the historian with a number of significant details. First, we may note the importance of Buddhist

[6] Lit: The body will be straightened.

[7] Probably *mgron*.

[8] Probably *gros mi*, which is a regional official/headman in Sikkim.

[9] Probably *sde pa*.

[10] This is a title given to tax collectors in Lepcha and Limbu regions for details see Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 5.

[11] Probably should read Pad blo.

[12] *'Bras ljongs phun tshogs khang gsar* refers to Rab brtan rtse palace built in 1649; this palace was described by Limbus as *Su khyim*, which translates in Tibetan as *khang gsar*. Could also be read as: *in the new house of the marvellous [land] of Sikkim*; or: *This [agreement] was compiled a fresh [in] the house of the marvellous [land] of Sikkim on the [x] day of the [x] month of the Water Rabbit [year].*

[13] *'grigs* could also be read as arranged, or brought together in the sense of compiled as such it could be possible to read this verb more simply as *made*.

terminology, specifically references to various deities of the Tibetan tradition, in contextualising the power and importance of this document, and by extension the Sikkimese King. Indeed the use of a host of deities to bear witness to this oath not only recognises the supremacy of Buddhism in early Sikkim but also shows that belief in the supernatural power of these deities was strong enough to be able to hold the signatories to account. In short, with belief in these deities comes fear: fear at what they will do if the signatories break their oath. Whilst it is difficult to extrapolate from this the mindset of the people of seventeenth century Sikkim, we can say with some degree of certainty that people most likely believed in the power of these gods. As historians, we have to be aware that we are dealing with a time different from our own, where people had faith in the power of the supernatural. As such it is not appropriate to interpret sources as only cynical expressions of power, but to understand them in light of the ideas of the time. There are, of course, examples where religious ideas have been used politically, but it is also true that statements of religious ideas may be motivated by belief and faith. It is often difficult to determine the precise rationale for religious statements in the Tibetan world, as the combination of the secular and sacred realms is considered the ideal system of governance. This has often led to either the interpretation of historical evidence as expressions of religious sentiment or cynical political opportunism. The reality of the pre-modern period of Tibet and the Himalaya, and the world-view that shaped it, is actually more complex where the boundaries of the religious and political worlds are blurred.

Of course a brief look at the signatories of this document shows that the individuals represent different ethnic communities, some of which were not Buddhist. For this reason a passing reference is made to non-Buddhist deities and local deities that have been incorporated into the local Buddhist pantheon such as Gangs chen mdzod lnga (recognised by Buddhists and non-Buddhists as a significant local protector deity), and "All the deities and guardians worshipped by us the people of four parts of Bkra shis steng kha, and all the districts [of this land such as] 'Bar spungs, (11) Ling dam, and the protector deities and patrons of the religions of the Gtsong and Mon". The inclusion of these local gods shows a high degree of cultural awareness on the part of the Sikkimese kingdom, inasmuch as it recognised the religious differences in the region and asked those gods also to bear witness and bind the

signatories to the oath. Of course if one looks at this cynically, the inclusion of those other deities could be understood as a means of ensuring that the non-Buddhist signatories could not simply sign the document without fear of supernatural recriminations, in the event of them breaking the oath. However, despite the lengthy references to Buddhist gods, the inclusion of the different religious traditions in the area shows an awareness of the area and its ethnic diversity.

The second section of this document is of crucial importance for our understanding of early Sikkimese history. It charts a significant development in the extent and range of the Sikkimese kingdom. First, it recognises the local importance of the signatories, by classing them as either ministers (*blon, mgron* probably for *mgron gnyer*) or leaders (*gros mi, rta sa, sde pa* etc.), presumably with territories of their own. Secondly, it is apparent that these local leaders have assembled in the palace of the Chos rgyal to recognise his supremacy, a single structure of authority and the subordination of the three different ethnic communities under this political order. In essence their presence at the signing of this document legitimates the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal in this region. Thirdly, the context for the signing of this agreement is explicitly stated: a previous Mon pa war. Now, what we are unsure about is whether this war was a rebellion against Phun tshogs rnam rgyal by groups under his authority or a war directed by independent fiefdoms against a mutually recognisable threat to the existing balance of power in the region; that is, a war against Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and his expanding dominion. The language used seems to illustrate a rebellion as it states that the signatories must abide by the Chos rgyal's commands indicates that they did not before. Of course we should not rely too much on the wording of this document without further evidence to illustrate the nature of the war/rebellion. It is clear, however, that this document was in all likelihood written after the end of hostilities and after Phun tshogs rnam rgyal had consolidated his control of the area. In short it could be read as a peace treaty of sorts, recognising the new political reality of seventeenth century western Sikkim.

The third passage continues with the theme of territorial and ethnic unity under the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, but also includes a significant warning to those who may break their oath. It recalls the deities mentioned in the opening passage of the document and calls on them to appear in wrathful form and devour those who break their

oath.[14] These references are most likely there to remind the signatories of the implications of breaking their oaths. It also highlights a need by the Chos rgyal to reaffirm his position, and perhaps illustrates his lack of trust in the signatories. This warning is counterpoised with what amounts to a promise of wealth and fortune. It is mentioned that those who serve the Chos rgyal, his family and dominion honestly and faithfully should be showered with wealth and prosperity by the gods mentioned. In essence what this is stating is that if they serve the Chos rgyal they will be rewarded. Finally the main text concludes by restating the earlier warning and documenting the penalties for deviating from this oath. They include a pledge breach fee of three measures of gold, physical punishment, and, in extreme cases, death. With this the signatories are under no illusion regarding the significance of the document they have signed, the power of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, and the penalties for the crime of disloyalty. In short this document, by the fact of its existence and the list of signatories, shows the supremacy of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal in this region. Indeed the fact that he could command leaders of the different ethnic groups in Sikkim to come and sign this document itself shows the levels of power he personally held at this time.

The final part of this document, the list of signatories, is perhaps one of the most important parts of this treaty. This is because it tells us directly the extent of the power of the Sikkimese kingdom in 1663. Unfortunately not all the signatories' places of habitation are listed, but those that are given show the regions under Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's rule (see figure 3.1 on page 65 for a map of some those regions). The following section will address the extent of the territory under Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's state and contextualise that state within the wider Tibetan and Himalayan political picture of this period. I will also return to the issue of economic and political stratification and the legal structures employed in early Sikkim.

[14] Similar documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth century found in Tibetan speaking areas of Nepal have been published by Ramble 2008. These documents have very similar wording to *LMT* and provide examples for comparison within the Tibetan world.

2. Contextualising Early Sikkim

With the sources that are available to us at present, it is possible to discern an approximate picture of early Sikkim. By and large, the areas directly or indirectly under the control of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal can be identified with regions in modern western Sikkim, small parts of eastern Nepal (namely parts of Limbuwan) and areas just east of the Ravang La (now in modern South Sikkim administrative district). Areas around modern Gangtok,[15] the current State capital of Sikkim and the former capital of the Sikkimese Kingdom from 1888–1975, are conspicuous by their absence from seventeenth century Sikkimese material. This is increasingly important given that traditional narratives locate the birthplace of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as Gangtok. In chapters two and three it was noted that Phun tshogs rnam rgyal originally hailed from a place known as Sgang tog Zil gnon rtse (chapter three page 61) or simply Sgang tog (chapter four page 97). The first reference clearly refers to Zil gnon in western Sikkim, just above Bkra shis sdings. The second reference, however, appears slightly more confusing. However, I suggest that this reference does not refer to the Gangtok we know as the contemporary capital of Sikkim, but simply denotes a hill top (the literal meaning of *sgang tog*). The reason for this view is, to put it simply, Gangtok as we now know it did not exist. Indeed we will notice that in a later period of Sikkimese history there is a migration of place names from west to east Sikkim, which follows the migration of Sikkimese landlords when the capital of Sikkim was moved from Rab brtan rtse to Tumlong around the 1780s. As was the case with British nobles, Sikkimese land owners were often simply referred to as the Lord (Rdzong dpon, Yab lags, A mthing etc.) of a given place, and so when they moved with the royal court in the late eighteenth century and received new land grants in those areas, the names of their original estates (or clan names, which were reflected in the landscape as toponyms) followed them. In that way for example, it is possible to locate two places by the name of 'Bar myag, one in west Sikkim and one in the modern district of South Sikkim. There are numerous examples of this process, suffice it to say the Sgang tog

[15] Please note the use of Sgang tog and Gangtok in this book. If not otherwise stated Sgang tog refers to the area in western Sikkim, whereas Gangtok refers to the area that now makes up the State capital of Sikkim.

of seventeenth century material most probably denotes Zil gnon in western Sikkim as was first argued in Mullard 2005b.

The reasoning behind this assertion is slightly complicated, but worth explaining here. First, Eastern Sikkim, or more importantly the areas around modern Gangtok, did not fall directly under Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's control. Regions to the South of Gangtok were contested between the local proto-state of Dam bzang rdzong (located 16km from modern Kalimpong), under the leadership of one Rgyal po A lcog,[16] the Bhutanese (who had been asserting themselves in eastern Sikkim) and the Tibetans, with whom Rgyal po A lcog seems to have been allied. John Ardussi (1977) has spent considerable time and effort on this problem of Rgyal po A lcog with regard to the western boundaries of Bhutan, and his work provides us with important information regarding the nature of state systems and territorial ownership in eastern Sikkim.[17] Dam bzang rdzong commands an important ridge with views of Ri nag (in modern east Sikkim but close to the border of Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim),[18] the high Himalaya of the Bhutan Tibet border, the lower hills of Bhutan and the southern hills of north-west Bengal. It was no doubt an important place on this ancient crossroads. Indeed in later history the old trade route between Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim passed just below the ridge on which the Rdzong is located.[19]

A number of military incursions by the Bhutanese into this area took place in the 1660s and 1670s, with Tibetan responses aimed at maintaining the integrity of Dam bzang as part of wider Tibetan hos-

[16] Ardussi (1977) notes that his name is spelt in a variety of ways and in Tibetan material from Tibet he is referred to as Mon pa A cog.

[17] I was fortunate enough to accompany John Ardussi on a field trip to western Sikkim and Kalimpong in the autumn of 2008. I took him up to the site of Dam bzang rdzong, which I, myself, had visited in 2006. We also had the opportunity to conduct a number of interviews with the local inhabitants and what follows here is based on that trip and Dr Ardussi's previous and extensive work on this topic. We hope in the near future to present papers on this subject based on the Sikkimese sources I have collected and the Bhutanese and Tibetan materials at Dr Ardussi's disposal.

[18] Some of the pasturelands of Ri nag came under dispute in the early twentieth century, when yak herders from Chumbi began settling there, causing a taxation crisis between Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet. There survive a number of letters and even a treaty regarding this issue in the Sikkimese Palace collection.

[19] There still survive a number of warehouses along this road, just outside Kalimpong, where traders would store their goods. From this site it is possible to view the route into Tibet via the Jalep La, the route taken by the Younghusband expedition in December 1903.

tility towards Bhutan in this period (Ardussi 1977: 327).[20] Indeed Rgyal po A lcog is much celebrated in the works of the Fifth Dalai Lama and in this period even visited Lhasa in the ninth month of 1668, where he met with the Dalai Lama (Ardussi 1977: 322). Two months after this meeting Tibet invaded Bhutan but failing to capitalise on this military incursion signed a peace treaty with Bhutan in 1669 (Ibid). Ardussi notes that this treaty, which was only valid until 1675, basically maintained the status quo, with regular border violations occurring during this period. Following the expiration of this treaty Tibet launched an attack on a Bhutanese outpost in the lower Chumbi Valley, leading to a full-scale war, which lasted from 1675–79 (Ardussi 1977: 327). During this war (in 1676) Rgyal po A lcog managed to take the Bhutanese outpost of Brda gling kha (15 km south of Dam bzang), however the outpost and Rgyal po A lcog were captured by Bhutanese forces later that year as a result of which Rgyal po A lcog was executed (Ardussi 1977: 327).

Sikkim's role in this war is conspicuously absent and it is probably from this that Ardussi suggests that Sikkim was probably too weak to check Bhutanese incursions. Whilst this is probably true, it is also likely that Sikkim lacked sufficient control over, what is now, eastern Sikkim and as such was unable to raise an army in the tri-border regions. Whatever the case may have been Sikkimese absence in this war raises serious questions about the extent of Sikkimese administration in eastern Sikkim and in particular around Gangtok. To further complicate these questions of Sikkimese rule in eastern Sikkim there is also archaeological evidence to suggest that after the defeat of Rgyal po A lcog, Gangtok fell under Bhutanese control. On the Stag rtse ridge just north of Gangtok lie the remains of a Bhutanese fortification.[21] Another fortification built during the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century can also been seen at Pendam (see figure 5.1), 10 km north of Rangpo (the modern entry point to Sikkim).

[20] The strength of Tibetan intervention in this region leads Ardussi to state that Mon pa a cog was only one of many factors that led to the intervention of Tibet, which Ardussi sees as part of Tibetan resistance to the 'Brug pa along its entire southern border from eastern Bhutan to Ladakh.

[21] In 2009, I along with my colleague Hissey Wongchuk visited this site and conducted a survey of the fort complex. The fort has an exterior wall, with defensive positions and arrow holes, there is an interior wall, providing a second level of defence, and the foundations of a central structure.



Figure 6.1 The Bhutanese fortifications near Pendam. Photo by author.

In addition to this the first reference I have come across regarding the region of Gangtok, as we now know it, appears in *JPKB*. The place is identified by a *rdzong dpon* of the Lepcha 'Bar phung clan, who was sent there by the third Chos rgyal of Sikkim, Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, during his reorganisation of Sikkim following the War of Succession (for more details see the following chapter). In this passage of *JPKB* we are told that the third incarnation of Lha btsun chen po, named 'Jigs med dpa' bo, met and stayed with this *rdzong dpon* (named A Khrung) in Gangtok around 1725 (*JPKB*: 444). In a paper presented at the international conference on the Buddhist Himalaya in October 2008, John Ardussi presented a document which indicated that there were Bhutanese taxpayers in the region of Gangtok as late as 1741, adding further to the confusion surrounding the control of the Gangtok region. In discussions with Dr Ardussi we agreed that in all likelihood the people of Gangtok probably paid taxes to both the Sikkimese State and the regions of Kalimpong which came under Bhutanese control after the wars with Rgyal po A lcog. Still the confusion surrounding eastern Sikkim, and Gangtok in particular, illustrates the need for further research on this period of Sikkimese, Bhutanese

and Tibetan history. This is particularly important given the geopolitical importance of this region as a tri-boundary area and an interface of significant trans-Himalayan trade. Indeed the importance of this region as a corridor for trade, figures largely in later Sikkimese history (see chapter seven).

This minor digression illustrates a particularly interesting, if confusing, time for (eastern) Sikkimese, Bhutanese and Tibetan relations. Furthermore this complex situation of competing regional powers being played out with regard to wider Tibetan concerns in this region, illustrates that in all likelihood the Rnam rgyal dynasty did not command a significant position in this region. Indeed, it further adds to the likelihood that the Sgang tog of the sources in chapters three and four do in fact refer to Zil gnon in western Sikkim. The lack of references to the Sikkimese kingdom in the material John Ardussi has used further adds to this hypothesis;[22] and given that *LMT* locates areas in western Sikkim, west of the Tista (see figure 3.1 on page 67 for a map of some of those places), it seems likely that during Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's reign, eastern Sikkim lay outside his territory.

3. Territory and Expansion in Early Sikkim

Whilst it appears that eastern Sikkim fell outside the regions under the direct control of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, a number of questions still remain regarding the territories under his direct control in western Sikkim. It is these questions, mainly regarding the methods of administrative organisation, including legal structures and taxation, to which I will now turn my attention. In chapter three I noted the emergence of a pattern of early state formation which involved the introduction of a rudimentary system of taxation and land economy, largely based on Tibetan models. It was also noted that early Sikkim seems to have

[22] It should be noted that, given the scarcity of sources from this period, my discussion of the Sgang tog problem should be considered as a hypothetical assertion and, like all theories, is subject to change depending upon information available. This is particularly important given that there are groups in Sikkim who claim descent from the messengers sent to receive Phun tshogs rnam rgyal from Gangtok. My intention is not to discredit these traditions but rather to explain the problems with asserting the traditional view of the migration of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal from Gangtok. To add to this confusion, according to Tashi Tobten (a local informant) there is also a place in Gangtok called Zil gnon rtse. However, I think this represents another example of the movement of place names in the late eighteenth century.

been characterised by a patchwork of proto-states which Phun tshogs rnam rgyal subsumed under his own state, through alliances and military conquests. *LMT*, presented in this chapter, seems to conform to this hypothetical model, with a number of significant individuals—local leaders in their own right—pledging their allegiance to and accepting the supremacy of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal. In all likelihood these signatories probably represent those who maintained ownership of their own lands, with rights to administer justice and collect taxes, in exchange for their acknowledgement of the overall supremacy of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and the dynasty he founded. We know nothing of those leaders, who may have lost lands, or the extent to which the signatories of this document retained their own lands in full, or whether some of their lands were brought under the direct administration of the early Sikkimese state. What we can assume, given the information in this source and the *La sogs rgyal rabs*, is that even these semi-independent regions fell under some central taxation structure and basic legal code.

In a forthcoming article Christoph Cüppers presents an important source for early Sikkim: a letter from Sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho to the second Chos rgyal of Sikkim, Bstan srung rnam rgyal. In this letter, the Sde srid responds to a request for an explanation of the Tibetan legal system, which the second Chos rgyal intended to introduce. From this we can see that the basic system of land law introduced during the time of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and noted in chapter three, was insufficient as a legal code for early Sikkim. In the document in this chapter we can see the beginnings of legal formulations, at least in regards to acts of treason and so from this limited picture we can see that, under the first Chos rgyal and certainly the second Chos rgyal, the Sikkimese state became concerned with formulating legal structures to assist in the administration of state and internal affairs. This was probably due to the fact that during Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's reign, the early Sikkimese state was largely concerned with expansion, conquering rival regions and subsuming those allied to the state under state control. Once this had been largely accomplished, which *LMT* illustrates, the next phase in Sikkimese statehood was characterised by administrative and organisational structures which would secure a constant flow of revenue and provide a political structure that could be used not only to govern but also to raise armies to protect the power of the Chos rgyal.

By 1657 areas under Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's control were already subject to a system of political organisation, which included ranks of *blon* or ministers responsible for tax collection, trade and presumably the administration of regions. Below these *Blon* came the headmen (*mgo chings*) and foremen (*las dpon*), who were responsible for supervising the lowest workers. There was also a rank of Lepcha Officials (*las byed mon pa*) from Bkra shis steng kha and Seng lding. The lowest ranks are known as *g.yog* or simply servants; we are unsure who these people were, though they probably resembled the *mi ser* of Tibetan hierarchical structures. This system provided for the collection of taxes on the autumnal harvest and taxes on trade and *'u lag* or compulsory transportation and other services. It seems that the signatories of *LMT* fall into the category of *blon* and so were probably incorporated into the pre-existing political and social organisation: remaining as local leaders responsible for tax collection and the administration of local justice. This form of stratification had a hereditary element according to the source described in chapter three, with land and the obligations or official posts associated with that land passing from father to son or to a *mag pa* (in-marrying son-in-law) if the family was without male offspring (a practice which still exists today).[23]

The model of stratification that has been briefly outlined here and in chapter three is of considerable importance to understanding early Sikkimese social and economic organisation. Fortunately we have at hand a record of this system including the names of various clans and individuals who make up the various strata previously outlined. This record is reproduced in appendix VIII and is the second document to be discussed in this chapter.

4. Socio-Economic and Political Organisation in Sikkim

One of the most important documents detailing the socio-economic organisation of early Sikkim can be found appended to the *La sogs rgyal rabs*, which was presented in chapter three. On the first page of the whole document (including the main historical text) we are given the title *Mon pa'i mtho* [tho] *byang zin bris su bkod pa'o*. This can

[23] See chapter two for details of this. On a field trip to west Sikkim I encountered a man of Lepcha origin in the Yogsam area who was a *mag pa*.

be translated as 'An established record and register of Mon pa'. This document appears to have been written by the same hand as the first part of the manuscript and was compiled over the period 1645–1676. Basically it is a list of clans, families and individuals that fall under the authority of various regions or leaders. Each section of the text has a brief introduction in which the rank of the following people are given, as well as the name of the higher ranking person whom they fall under. The text is divided into four sections beginning with the Yog bsam mon pa, followed by Tshong skyel mon pa, Las byed mon pa and Rdo mon. The first refers to the Lepchas of Yog bsam in western Sikkim, the following two refer to ranks (as noted in chapter three), whereas the final classification seems to refer to a location.

Whilst, this text provides important evidence of the administrative capabilities of early Sikkim it is not free from problems. The text is often quite difficult to follow on account of the complete absence of grammatical particles and verbs and the appearance of names unknown in Tibetan. For these reasons it is possible to read this text differently from the rendition found in appendix VIII.

This manuscript (hereafter *MTB*) provides the historian with a comprehensive list of over 378 named individuals as well as 1000 individuals said to be under the authority of the Rta sa of Rdo mon, called A dkar (*MTB*: 20 see Appendix VIII for details), giving a total population of 1,378 in the regions covered by *MTB*. All of the people in this register are designated as Mon pa, though it is clear that this term does not refer to the Lepcha exclusively as a number of Limbu names are also documented. This probably means that although *LMT* uses the term Mon to refer to Lepchas in *MTB* the term Mon conveys a meaning closer to that of 'non-Tibeto-Sikkimese'. This is particularly interesting given that *LMT* recognised the ethnic plurality of Sikkim, whereas this register fails to distinguish between Lepcha and Limbu groups. This is even more puzzling given the fact that *MTB* meticulously documents the clans, regions and social positions of each group yet ignores the groups' ethnic origin. This oversight could be due to a number of factors, such as the common use of *mon* to designate non-Tibetan 'barbarians'; a high degree of ethnic mixing (if not marriage than at least in terms of geographical proximity); or that the ethnicity of the individuals was superfluous to the purpose of this register.

The precise purpose of this register is not given in the text itself, though in all likelihood it had a significant administrative function. Indeed it seems, somewhat, unlikely that a register like this would have

been produced accept for the purposes of documenting the population for tax collection a purpose which is explicitly noted in later documents of a similar type found in the Sikkimese Palace archives (See Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 15–30). Each section begins by documenting the jurisdiction under which the groups fall. For example the first section begins by informing the reader that the Yog bsam mon pa fall under the jurisdiction of Ma chen Byams pa.[24] This probably means Ma chen Byams pa was responsible for collecting taxes from the Mon pa of the Yog bsam area, or at least these people fell under his administrative control. Furthermore the fact that the groups documented are also designated by the terms of stratification already encountered (*las byed mon pa*, *tshong skyel mon pa*, etc.)[25] adds to the hypothesis that *MTB* was conducted for the purpose of taxation or internal administration. In addition, unlike genealogical lists, this register details the whole population, including women and so *MTB* resembles a census. The connection between censuses and taxation are well known, for example the use of censuses for taxation purposes during the Sa skya-Yuan period of Tibetan history has been noted by Petech (1980), The Assyrian census of the seventh century BCE which detailed tax and conscription obligations (Postgate 1974: 225) or similarly the Doomsday book of early Norman rule in England is another example. It has also been noted by Karmay, in his study of the thirty-nine tribes of Hor, that following Sera monastery's acquisition of the Hor-tsho region in 1914 a census was carried out for the purpose of levying taxes (2005: 188–189). In Ramble's recent work on the Te archive he introduces a similar taxation document HMA/Te/Tib/11, which includes the enumeration of livestock as well as households (2008: 89) and in a recent catalogue of text found in the Sikkimese palace archive there are a number of taxation registers which share similarities with *MTB* (Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 15–30). Although *MTB* only concerns itself with human inhabitants, comparison of material from the wider Tibetan world may prove similar techniques in the construction of census material for taxation.

[24] MTB: 12. *Ma chen byams pa'i 'og tu yog bsam mon pa'i mtho byang yin.* "A list of Mon pa [from] Yog bsam under the jurisdiction of Ma chen byams pa."

[25] MTB: 13 and 18. *Yongs lim gyi 'og tshong skyel mon pa'i mtho byang yin no* "a list of tshong skyel mon pa under the jurisdiction of Yongs lim [Limbu]" and *A 'dings 'og las byed mon pa'i tho byang yin* "A List of mon pa officials under the jurisdiction of A 'dings [Lepcha]", respectively.

In addition to this *MTB* illustrates the sophistication of state structures in early Sikkim. Firstly it tells the historian about early stratification, but more important than that it shows that there must have been a high degree of administrative control over the regions of early Sikkim; it would not be possible to carry out such a survey without relative peace in the region. In addition conducting a survey of this detail would require numerous data collectors, equipment (such as paper, bamboo pens etc.), and supplies (food, fire wood etc.). Many things such as food, fire wood and lodging would have been extracted on site through *'u lag* and other forms of taxation, nonetheless the organisational skill required to collect this data is phenomenal considering the distances travelled and the resources available to data collectors in seventeenth century Sikkim. It shows us that there must have been a high degree of territorial integrity and that the stratification models and hierarchical power structures, discussed earlier, were well established if not universally accepted. The fact that this survey was compiled over a period of around thirty years also illustrates the changing nature of Sikkim, which is documented in *LMT*. The earlier parts of *MTB* document the *Mon pa* in the regions closely associated with the early domain of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal around Yog bsam (*MTB*: 12), Sang mo and 'Ben.[26]

The later part of the text compiled in 1676 includes Limbu and Lepcha individuals in high positions such as the Limbu Yong Lim (*MTB*: 12) and the Lepcha A 'dengs (*MTB*: 18); confirming the hypothesis of the acquisition of Lepcha and Limbu lands under Phun tshogs rnam rgyal following the defeat of the 'mon pa' war/rebellion and the signing of *LMT*.

What is interesting is that Si mig, which is generally considered to fall outside the region of early Sikkim, is mentioned as the birth place of Nang thog Nang yan, whose children are noted in the register (*MTB*: 16); it remains unclear whether Nang thog nang yan migrated back to western Sikkim or whether Si mig fell under the control of the early Sikkimese state. Si mig probably may have fell outside of the personal control of the Sikkimese Chos rgyal, though it could have been a tribu-

[26] MTB: 12. *Rta sa sang 'ben gyi rgyud*. "The clan of the Rta sa of Sang and 'Ben". It should be noted that Sang 'ben clearly refer to the places Sang mo and 'Ben, which are villages on the eastern side of the hills of Rwa lang and are in close proximity to each other. Rta sa is a rank equivalent to bcu dpon, for a discussion of this term see Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 5.

tary region to both Sikkim and Bhutan. Identifying the position of Si mig in relation to early Sikkim and Bhutan is extremely important as if it fell under Sikkimese jurisdiction, this reference in *MTB* is the first indication that an area east of the Tista fell under the administration of early Sikkim. Given the difficulty of defining the Sikkim-Bhutan border in the seventeenth century the position of Si mig is fundamental to our understanding of early Sikkim-Bhutan relations. However, it should be remembered that boundaries in the seventeenth century were often fluid and subject to change over time and whilst the Tista river forms a convenient 'natural boundary' in all likelihood it did not form the actual boundary of Sikkim and Bhutan for the simple reason that a river valley is more difficult to defend than a mountain ridge.[27]

As well as the wider political and organisational aspects of this manuscript it also provides an insight into social aspects of early Sikkim. For example the practice of adopting children seems relatively widespread, with a number being documented in *MTB*. It is understandable that a family without a male heir may adopt a son who marries the family's daughter in order to maintain hereditary rights over land (in the tradition of the *mag pa*) but this text also includes the adoption of girls. It is unsure whether these women would have been able to inherit land, but what is sure is the importance of children in early Sikkimese society. In contemporary Sikkimese and Tibetan society it is reasonably common for a family to adopt children (often from poor backgrounds). Today many of these children are sent to school, but also balance their study with household chores. Children in early Sikkim, much the same as their contemporary counterparts, were seen as vital to parents in old age. This is incredibly important in societies without social assistance for the elderly, and where adult children care for their aging parents. Large families are also important for the Tibetan economic system as certain taxes fell on the household and not the individual making it easier to have a large household population to carry out *'u lag* and *rkang 'gro* (corvee labour) duties. In some cases adopted children rise to important positions, as is documented

[27] Michael Aris' work (1979 and 1994) show that Bhutan had extended its control over the regions around Kalimpong and later sources such as *JPKB* and the works of Ardussi (2008 and 1977) show that Bhutan had, if not a sizeable presence in Gangtok, than at least exercised a degree of influence in the area.

in *MTB*: 18 with the case of Mnags mo U rgyan skyid who reached the position of *las byed mon pa*.[28]

5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined two sources that are important for the study of early Sikkimese state structures and offer rare insights into early Sikkim. The first document *LMT* shows that the rule of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal did not remain uncontested but was challenged by a rebellion or a war led by non-Tibeto-Sikkimese ethnic groups. The defeat of these groups led to the incorporation of their territories by early Sikkim, and their subsequent subjection to the stratification model discussed in chapter three. The second document *MTB* confirms this, with evidence of a number of Lepcha and Limbu individuals holding position of high rank within the local administration.

The question of Gangtok and Zil gnon was also discussed. It seems unlikely that Phun tshogs rnam rgyal extended his direct control over the Gangtok region, a conclusion that once again runs contrary to traditional Sikkimese narratives. Indeed the material presented within this chapter tells us more of a climate of competing assertions of power not only in western Sikkim but also in the areas of Kalimpong and Gangtok. Whilst we are still far from fully understanding this picture of early Sikkim, the complex nature of the region and the various states or local authorities have been highlighted, illustrating the unreliability of historical traditions formed in later periods. Indeed the two documents presented within this chapter tell a more credible story of state formation, one that we may be familiar with in regards to European or American history. This process seems to have involved the suppression of other states, be they Lepcha, Limbu or Tibeto-Sikkimese, by Phun tshogs rnam rgyal and his allies.

The second document gives an insight into the administrative and organisational structures of early Sikkim. It tells us of the Sikkimese *mon pa* population in extreme detail and is the first statistical record in Sikkim. This in itself is quite an accomplishment, yet it also gives a more complete picture of the system of stratification discussed in

[28] MTB: 18. *Bu rgan pa sang man* [gyi] *bu tshab las byed mngags mo u rgyan skyid.* "The oldest son [called] Sang man's adopted child [is] the official Mngags mo u rgyan skyid."

chapter three by identifying real people with positions of authority and the groups under their control. This gives a picture of Sikkim as an administrative unit, displaying the sophistication of its organisation despite the fact that early Sikkim was characterised by expansion and conflict. However, having this model in place made it easy for new regions to be incorporated into the state, through the appointment of the previous leaders into administrative positions. With this, in all likelihood, came regional autonomy with the state principally concerned with tax collection, the purpose for which *MTB* was most likely compiled. Indeed in other areas of the Himalaya, such as Limbu areas after the eastern expansion of Nepal or the Tibetan annexation of Mnga' ris in 1683, relative autonomy was re-established after conquest with the re-appointment of local hereditary elites.[29]

In this and the previous chapters (three–six) I have attempted to illustrate what early Sikkim may have been like with regards to its religious, political and administrative aspects. It should already be clear that there remains a huge discrepancy between the later narratives and the information contained within the sources discussed in these chapters. In the following chapter I will be returning to the later historical narratives of Sikkim and will attempt to present a number of reasons for the development of these narratives, by contextualising them within later historical, religious and political developments.

[29] In the case of Mnga' ris the central Tibetan state appointed officials from the centre as well as the pre-existing local elites.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BHUTAN, SIKKIM AND BRITISH INDIA: THE ARRIVAL OF 'JIGS MED DPA' BO AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

In the previous chapters (chapters 3–6) a number of events were presented which conflict with the historical narratives of Sikkim developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Given that it appears as if the early history of Sikkimese state formation differs greatly from those narratives, an important question arises regarding the development of the orthodox history for Sikkim. Why did these narratives become the accepted history of Sikkim? To answer this question we have to look at two distinct periods in Sikkimese history. First the War of Succession c.1699–1708 and its aftermath; a war which developed into a serious conflict involving Bhutanese and Tibetan forces. Secondly, the expansion of British influence in the Himalaya and the ultimate establishment of British rule in Sikkim.

This chapter will examine information regarding the War of Succession, highlighting events that led to the conflict and the wider repercussions of that event for Sikkim. In addition the role of Lha btsun chen po's third incarnation, 'Jigs med dpa' bo, in the religious and political history of Sikkim, will be discussed. Most pertinent to this is the exile of the third Sikkimese king to Tibet, the influences he encountered and the people with whom he became associated. It is this event that appears to have been the turning point in Sikkimese history and historiography. In this chapter the importance of 'Jigs med dpa' bo's arrival in Sikkim and the flight of members of Gter bdag gling pa's family to Sikkim after the destruction of Smin gling monastery in the 1720s will be highlighted. It will be proposed that these events (as well as the Bhutanese war and the arrival of the British) were fundamental in establishing a new Sikkimese historical approach to the period of the first Chos rgyal, which was later expanded and developed into a proto-national historical narrative following the arrival of the British in Sikkim.

1. The War of Succession

In the previous chapter the final date encountered in *MTB* was 1675. By that time the second Chos rgyal Bstan srung rnam rgyal had ascended the throne (reigned 1670–c.1699). According to *BGR* Phun tshogs rnam rgyal had abdicated in favour of Bstan srung rnam rgyal and it is likely that this was done to ease the transition between the two reigns and consolidate the Rnam rgyal family's position. Little is known about the reign of the second Chos rgyal, except for two developments that were significant for the history of Sikkim. The first was the establishment of correspondence between the Sikkimese kingdom and Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, regarding the introduction of a legal code in Sikkim (Cüppers, forthcoming).[1] The second was his marital life. He was married to three women: a Tibetan lady from the family of the Sde pa of Zam gsar, a Bhutanese woman (most likely from the family of the Spa gro dpon slob) and a Limbu woman (for details see the Rnam rgyal family tree on page xii). The latter gave birth to a son, known only as Gu ru on account of his enrolment as a monk, and a daughter whose name is unknown. He also had an illegitimate son (Yug mthing A [g]rub) from an affair with Nam bong, the wife of Ya sa A phong. His Tibetan wife, Lha lcam Padma Bu 'khrid, had one son, Phyag rdor rnam rgyal (1686–1717). His Bhutanese wife, Nam bi dbang mo gave birth to a daughter, Phan bde dbang mo. Yug mthing A rub was the eldest son, but being illegitimate could not inherit the throne. Phan bde dbang mo was the eldest of the legitimate children, followed by Phyag rdor rnam rgyal (who was only ten years old when his father died) and then the two children from the Limbu wife.[2]

It can be assumed that these different marriages served to balance the competing powers in the region. Bhutan already had the reputation for being aggressive, following the western expansion of the state under the Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal and the numerous con-

[1] This correspondence has considerable importance for the legal history of early Sikkim. In particular, Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho was influential in the re-writing of Tibetan law. He is credited with adapting the Gtsang princes' legal code into a scheme based on sixteen laws. A copy of this text has been translated in *GoS* from a manuscript held in Pho brang monastery in Northern Sikkim. It is difficult to date this manuscript. However, if it proves to have originated from the seventeenth century our understanding of Sikkimese legal history will be enhanced significantly.

[2] Further details can be found in *BGR*: chapters eight and nine, and in PD/9.5/003 housed in the Royal palace archive.

flicts between Bhutan, proto-states in eastern Sikkim and Tibet.[3] The marriage to a Tibetan wife no doubt secured connections between Sikkim and Tibet, as Bstan srungs rnam rgyal's marriage with the Limbu wife achieved in the case of the states of Limbuwan. The Bhutanese relationship was particularly important given that Bhutanese influence extended into what is now eastern Sikkim, following the assassination of Rgyal po A lcog in the 1670s (for details see chapter six page 153–156). However, with these marriages different influences from Bhutan, Tibet, Limbuwan and the Lepchas would have been present in the Sikkimese court and, with only Bstan srung rnam rgyal invested with the power to balance these forces; the competing factions could easily threaten the stability of the Sikkimese state. Throughout history the death of the sovereign has often caused succession disputes and armed conflict. Similarly, Sikkim also had the potential to fall into anarchy and civil war as the competing groups vied for political supremacy. It seems that the war of succession started in this way between groups allied to the crown prince Phyag rdor rnam rgyal and those supporting the Bhutanese faction and the princess Phan bde dbang mo.

According to *BGR*, Bstan srung rnam rgyal died in 1700, and it is in this same year that the Bhutanese or more specifically a force under Rta pa ngag dbang 'phrin las and Mgron phan las, invaded Sikkim at the request of Phan bde dbang mo (*BGR*: 64). However, according to other sources (such as *DL6*,[4] *JPKB*: 51) it appears that the second Chos rgyal died in 1697 (there is considerable doubt over this date),[5] and that shortly after this date Phyag rdor rnam rgyal fled from Sikkim via Zar[6] as the Bhutanese forces invaded Sikkim from Sa

[3] For details of the wars between Bhutan and Tibet and the western expansion of Bhutan see Aris 1979, Ardussi 1977, and the previous chapter in this book for the implications of these events on Sikkim.

[4] The full title for this text, accredited to Sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, is: *Thams cad mkhyen pa drug pa blob bzang rin chen tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho'i thun mong phyi'i rnam thar*.

[5] It should be noted that in an unpublished article (first presented at the Gangtok conference in 2008) by Lobsang Shastri, using sources from Tibet, the date of 1700 for the death of the second Chos rgyal has been restated. According to these sources Sde sring Sang rgyas rgya mtsho sent medical practitioners to the Sikkimese court in 1699, to treat the second Chos rgyal with his ailing health. Shastri also notes that the Chos rgyal died within the year, indicating that the 1700 date may in fact be correct.

[6] Zar is located just to the north of the Tibet-Nepal border and north of Wa lung. This indicates that *BGR* is accurate when it details that Phyag rdor rnam rgyal fled Sikkim through Ilam and Walung. (*BGR*: 65): *Ilam dang/ tsong yul wa lung brgyud bod phyogs phebs*.

ljongs (*JPKB*: 51).[7] Unfortunately there is little information regarding Sikkim during the period of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal's exile in Tibet, with most sources documenting his activities in Tibet. It was during this period that the third Chos rgyal attended the enthronement of Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho as the sixth Dalai Lama. He also met with him privately and made offerings of silver coins and monastic robes (*JPKB*: 52). His time in Tibet, lasting twelve years, was significant for the development of Sikkimese history, in particular with reference to the development of the religious dominance of Padma yang rtse monastery and the traditions of Lha btsun chen po.

Two significant events effected the development of Lha btsun chen po's tradition in Sikkim. In chapters four and five it was noted that, contrary to the later narratives, Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin was the more influential of the Tibetan lamas present during the period of the first Sikkimese king. Indeed, according to some accounts the Mnga' bdag family held the position as royal preceptors, a view shared by this author.[8] Following the death of Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, his position passed to his son Byams pa bstan 'dzin and from him to his own son Mnga' bdag rin chen mgon. Mnga' bdag rin chen mgon is mostly remembered for his affair with Phan bde dbang mo (see Rnam rgyal dynasty diagram), the sister of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, who was considered responsible for the Bhutanese invasion of Sikkim following the death of the second Chos rgyal, Bstan srung rnam rgyal.

Mnga' bdag rin chen mgon, perhaps unwittingly, was embroiled in this event through his affair with Phan bde dbang mo and whilst it appears that he was not an active opponent of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, his relationship with Phan bde dbang mo made his position as royal preceptor untenable. Though he remained in Sikkim, conduct-

[7] This is probably Sa ljongs in eastern Sikkim (just below Rumtek). If this is the case it indicates that Sa ljongs was well within Bhutanese territory around the time of the War of Succession. Thus Sikkimese territorial power in the late 17th century could not have extended up to this region of eastern Sikkim. After the defeat of the Lepcha king of the Kalimpong region in the 1650s this area of modern east Sikkim district must therefore have been part of Bhutan. This region probably became part of Sikkim after the Bhutanese defeat in the war with Sikkim c.1708. The defeat of Bhutan is, in Sikkimese sources, put down to the efforts of Karma Dar rgyas (a Sikkimese minister) and Tibetan support. However, it may be likely that after the death of the Zhabs drung of Bhutan was officially announced in 1705, the Bhutanese became more concerned with internal politics than with the expansion of Bhutan into Sikkimese territory.

[8] For full details of this see chapters four and five and the works of Lha Tshe ring (2002).

ing prayers in Rab brtan rtse palace at the request of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal (Lha Tshe ring 2002: 63) his main work was conducted in the northern town of La chung, where he stayed for some time, and areas of eastern Sikkim (such as Pendam),[9] away from the Royal court in west Sikkim. However, after the return of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal from Tibet his position became irrelevant, in as far as his family was traditionally the royal preceptors, as 'Jigs med dpa' bo, the disciple of Gter bdag gling pa and the third incarnation of Lha btsun chen po, also arrived in Sikkim. And it is from the activities of 'Jigs med dpa' bo, supported by the third Chos rgyal, that the position of Lha btsun chen po in early Sikkimese history, and as a religio-cultural hero, become emphasised. This was in part due to the resurgence of Lha btsun chen po's religious tradition and the introduction of practices from Smin grol gling in Sikkim caused by the presence of 'Jigs med dpa' bo and the resulting decline of the Mnga' bdag tradition.

2. 'Jigs med dpa' bo: Revival and Reform

The arrival of 'Jigs med dpa' bo in Sikkim c.1709 caused two fundamental changes in Sikkimese society. The first was his role in transforming Padma yang rtse and the traditions of Lha btsun chen po from a minor monastery and religious tradition into Sikkim's most important monastery and the dominant religious tradition in Sikkim. The second involved the reconstruction of state and political structures, including the creation of monastic estates, the ennobling of the 'Bar spung family, and establishment of control over eastern Sikkim. In order to assess the impact of these events in relation to the reconstruction of history, we need to know something of the life and activities of 'Jig med dpa' bo.

'Jigs med dpa' bo was born in 1682 and at a young age was recognised as the third incarnation of Lha btsun chen po. Like other lamas he received a number of names from high-ranking lamas. One of these names was O rgyan chos 'phel, which he received from Gter bdag gling pa. Most of his early life was spent in the monastery of Zar sprul sku in Zar, just north of the Wa lung (Nepal) border in southern Tibet. Zar sprul sku, one of 'Jigs med dpa' bo's principal teachers, was quite

[9] Pendam is the site of a Bhutanese fortification (see figure 6.1 page 150).

an influential lama who, during the life of the second incarnation of Lha btsun chen po, was given religious control over Lha btsun chen po's teachings and Rdzogs chen in Dbus and Gtsang by the Tibetan government in Lhasa (*JPKB*: 32–33). Zar sprul sku also visited Sikkim in 1691–1692, but we know little of his relationship with the Sikkimese Chos rgyal. 'Jigs med dpa' bo and Zar sprul sku, like Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, attending the enthronement of the Sixth Dalai Lama in 1697 and it appears that it was at this time that he first met the Sikkimese Chos rgyal (*JPKB*: 55–56). At the age of twenty (1702) he travelled to Smin grol gling where he received initiations from Gter bdag gling pa and teachings from Dha rma shri (the younger brother of Gter bdag gling pa).[10]

In 1709 'Jigs med dpa' bo made his first trip to Sikkim. Whilst there he introduced the practices of Gu ru drag dmar (245.1) and attended Padma yang rtse at the invitation of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, where he stayed for two days (270). The following day (4th day of 11th month of the Ox year—1709) he went to Rab brtan rtse where he was received by the Chos rgyal, offered chang, enjoyed a theatre performance and received money offerings from the Sikkimese ministers. On the 13th day he returned to Padma yang rtse and gave the root initiation of the *Rig 'dzin srog sgrub* (Lha btsun chen po's *gter ma*) to 36 monks (277). He also introduced the practice of making *gtor ma*, butter statues and the rituals of Gu ru drag dmar, which are still performed over the last five days before Lo gsar (278.4). The introduction of *drag dmar* rituals was extremely important for establishing the primacy of Padma yang rtse monastery in Sikkim, which was further enhanced by Phyag rdor rnam rgyal's sponsorship of a number of important rituals that took place there (280.2). In 1712 'Jigs med dpa' bo returned to Tibet with Chos rgyal Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, who wanted to visit his mother's (Padma bu 'khrid) family home north of Bde chen khang gsar. During this time there seems to have been a conflict between some of the disciples of Zar sprul sku, which resulted in the expulsion of two Sikkimese lamas from Tibet. 'Jigs med dpa' bo, however, remained in

[10] *JPKB*: 73–125. This section of the biography of 'Jigs med dpa' bo lists the teachings he received whilst resident at Smin grol gling. This includes the 12 volumes of Sangs rgyas gling pa's *Bla ma dgong 'dus*, from Padma 'gyur med rgya mtsho (1686–1718, son and principal disciple of Gter bdag gling pa); the *gter ma* cycles of Lha btsun chen po; the history of the discovery of *nor gter* and the *Gu ru drag ma* texts compiled by Gter bdag gling pa.

Tibet and visited the relics of Gter bdag gling pa (who died in 1714). Thereafter he returned to Sikkim, where he was received in Ung cum by Phyag rdor rnam rgyal. From Sa rgyas [sic] mchod rten (on the old Rgyal shing to Rab brtan rtse road) all the monks from Padma yang rtse were lined up to meet him, with the Chos rgyal and his wife at the head of the line (326–330). He stayed there for three days before travelling to Sgrub sde (near Yog bsam) where he made offerings to all the monks.

He was also responsible for the reconstruction and consecration of Mchod rten mthong ba rang grol and the Gu ru lha khang (sponsored by the Chos rgyal) in Bkra shis sdings which had been looted and set on fire during the Sikkim-Bhutan conflict (332, 345–347).[11] This seems to have been quite a significant occasion with around 1000 monks and laypeople attending the service. The Chos rgyal distributed beef and seven *srang*[12] to all who had attended. Though it is not explicitly stated in *JPKB*, it is clear that this marked the declining fortunes of the Mnga' bdag tradition in Sikkim and the rise of 'Jigs med dpa' bo's importance in the region, and it is no coincidence that this event happened directly before the annual 'Bum chu festival held on the 14th and 15th day of the new year. He was later to cement this position through a system which extended the control of Padma yang rtse monastery in Sikkim: this involved dispatching representatives from Padma yang rtse to key Mnga' bdag monasteries, a move which indicated the suppression of Mnga' bdag and the ascendancy of Padma yang rtse.

The tension is further evidenced by the role of Padma yang rtse in the funeral rites of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal. The death of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal is often portrayed as an assassination organised by his sister Phan bde dbang mo in a final attempt to seize the Sikkimese throne. Although *JPKB* does not detail the precise events of the Chos rgyal's death in 1717 (stating that he died from a life-threatening illness;

[11] This is quite a significant event, given that Bkra shis sdings was the principal seat of the Mnga' bdag tradition in Sikkim. His presence and prominent role during the re-consecration of this monastery reflects his growing position in Sikkimese religious and political life.

[12] A *srang* is a measure of weight equal to approximately 50g. It is also a monetary unit and it is likely, although not explicitly stated, that in this context it refers to dngul srang which are silver coins. Sikkim, like Tibet, did not mint its own currency, but relied on Nepalese mints to produce coinage. The devaluation of the Tibetan currency due to counterfeiting and debasement (reducing the content of silver or gold in commodity money i.e. money whose value derives from the commodity it is made from) was one of issues that led to the Nepal-Tibet war of 1788–1792.

JPKB: 350) there are other sources which corroborate the traditional story of the death of the king. An important historical text in the Palace collection, written shortly after the event, describes the assassination plot in detail and the resulting execution of Phan bde dbang mo, who was suffocated by having a Kha btags stuffed down her throat, in Gnam rtse (see figure 7.2).[13] According to *JPKB* (351–353) Phyag rdor rnam rgyal's corpse was carried from the hot springs, where he died, to Rab brtan rtse palace where it remained for seven days. During that time the monks from Padma yang rtse performed a number of rituals for the deceased Chos rgyal, and on the 19th day of the 2nd month in 1717 conducted the funeral itself.

One month after the death of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal, his son 'Gyur med rnam rgyal was enthroned as the Chos rgyal by 'Jigs med dpa' bo. This was the first time in Sikkimese history that Padma yang rtse monks had led the enthronement of the Chos rgyal, marking the dominance of this monastery in Sikkim. The ascendancy of 'Jigs med dpa' bo in Sikkimese religious and political life is further illustrated by an event that was to solidify the position of Padma yang rtse and the Smin grol gling tradition in Sikkim: the flight of Mi 'gyur dpal sgron (1699–1769) and the rest of Gter bdag gling pa's family following the destruction of Smin grol gling during the Dzungar invasion of Tibet, and the Manchu protectorate of 1721–1723 (Petech 2003[1972]).

Mi 'gyur dpal sgron, her mother (Phun tshogs dpal 'dzoms—the wife of Gter bdag gling pa) and two sisters accompanied by four government officials from Tibet arrived in Sikkim in 1720. Mi 'gyur dpal sgron gave a number of initiations to the monks of Padma yang rtse and to 'Jigs med dpa' bo. 'Jigs med dpa' bo and Mi 'gyur dpal sgron seem to have spent time together exchanging teachings and initiations, and he notes in his biography that "although she is a woman, she is a very accomplished spiritual practitioner" (*JPKB*: 358 line 4).[14] A year

[13] There are a number of sources which detail the events of the War of Succession, the death of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal and the assassination of Phan bde dbang mo. One account survives in a text known locally as Yug mthing A rub's document (written c.1720). Unfortunately, this text went missing from the Royal Archive in 2005 along with a number of other documents (see Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 2 and 223–244). It was this text that forms the basis of the account found in *BGR*.

[14] The male chauvinism exhibited in this quote illustrates the dominance of religious affairs in Tibet by male practitioners and may also indicate the relative position of women during this period.



Figure 7.1 Excerpt from *JPKB* showing the meeting between Chos rgyal Phyag rdor rnam rgyal and 'Jigs med dpa' bo. Photo by author.



Figure 7.2 Gnam rtse rdzong. This was the site of the assassination of Phan bde dbang mo in 1717. It was later converted into a monastery in 1836. Photo by author.

into their stay in Sikkim the younger sister of Mi 'gyur dpal sgron, identified as Mi 'gyur sgrol ma (*BGR*: 86), was married to the fourth Chos rgyal of Sikkim 'Gyur med rnam rgyal, who was aged only fourteen—an event which created an important alliance between Smin grol gling and Sikkim. Indeed, despite the fact that the marriage did not last, the visit by the family of Gter bdag gling pa and the subsequent marriage added to the prestige of 'Jigs med dpa' bo (who was considered responsible for arranging the match) and by extension Padma yang rtse. In addition this event consolidated the connections between Smin grol gling and Sikkim and from this time Padma yang rtse became, in effect, a branch monastery of Smin grol gling with monks regularly travelling there to study and receive initiations. In 1722 Mi 'gyur dpal sgron and her mother and one sister returned to Tibet (359), leaving behind her other sister (now wife of the Chos rgyal) and a remarkable impression on the religious traditions of Sikkim.

Padma yang rtse's position was also guaranteed by the establishment of a monastic estate free from tax obligations to the Sikkimese state. This estate extended from the ridge on which the monastery stands north to the Ra thang River, north-west to Khechapalri (Mkha' spyod dpal ri) and south to Rgyal zhing (see PD/1.1/003m in Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 16) and Leg shib and the Ga led River.[15] In addition to these estates a later document PD/1.1/032b (from the palace collection) indicates that various families traditionally under Bkra shis sdings were required to pay taxes (though described as 'offerings') to Padma yang rtse, indicating the political as well as religious supremacy of Padma yang rtse over the Mnga' bdag monastery of Bkra shis sdings. The main estate of Padma yang rtse bordered that of Karma dar rgyas of the Brag dkar pa family (G.yang thang rdzong), and who played a crucial role in repelling the Bhutanese invasion. Like Padma yang rtse, Karma dar rgyas was given his estate during this period as a reward for his actions whilst commanding the Sikkimese army (for

[15] According to the monks of Padma yang rtse the third Chos rgyal issued a land grant detailing the territory of this estate. It is generally believed that this document was destroyed during the Sikkim-Nepal war when Padma yang rtse was looted and sacked by the Gorkha army. The Ecclesiastical Department files show that the monastery received sizeable revenue from these lands, which included cardamom plantations, rice fields (approximately 4000kg per year) and taxes levied on the market towns of Rgyal zhing and Leg shib.

details see Mullard 2003b).[16] It is also during this period of Sikkimese history that the 'Bar phung family make their appearance. A khrung, the son of Yug mthing A rub, was dispatched to Gangtok by Phyag rdor rnam rgyal[17] to act as the rdzong dpon, and it was here that 'Jigs med dpa' bo and Karma dar rgyas (by now the Phyag mdzod of Sikkim) stayed whilst returning from Tibet (*JPKB*: 443–444).

These three examples illustrate the changes that took place with regard to Sikkimese political organisation following the war of succession. Indeed this period saw the radical transformation of landholdings in Sikkim, caused in part by the betrayal of earlier Sikkimese landlords during the War of Succession and by the creation of new landed families such as the 'Bar phung family in Gangtok. The precise role or agency of 'Jigs med dpa' bo in these changes are not explicitly identifiable; however, the minority of the fourth Sikkimese Chos rgyal, 'Gyur med rnam rgyal, would have certainly offered 'Jigs med dpa' bo the opportunity to exercise his religious influence for political ends. It is certain that his involvement in the marriage between the Chos rgyal and the daughter of Gter bdag gling pa is an example of this influence. What is more important, however, is his role in shaping the course of later historical narratives regarding the formation of the Sikkimese state and the persona of Lha btsun chen po.

'Jigs med dpa' bo's growing position in Sikkimese religious affairs had a huge impact on the position of Padma yang rtse and the cult of Lha btsun chen po. Indeed around 1726 'Jigs med dpa' bo was responsible for the refurbishment of the Gtsug lag khang in Rab brtan rtse palace (455). Evidence unearthed by the Archaeological Survey of India (Kolkata circle) and now housed in a storeroom in Rgyal zhing (modern Geyzing) show that this involved the construction of sculptured images associated with the Lha btsun tradition.[18] These included stone carvings of 'Ja' tshon snying po (a principal teacher of Lha btsun

[16] This family was to play an important role during the Sikkim-Nepal war and the subsequent political history of Sikkim. The current Yang thang yab lags is a member of the Sikkimese legislative assembly and a minister in the state government.

[17] Though Gangtok seems to have been part of Sikkimese territory following the end of the War of Succession, some families continued to pay taxes to Bhutan as late as 1741 (Ardussi *in press*).

[18] This storeroom also houses a number of old cooking utensils and other important artefacts. The intention of the organisers was to arrange these items in a museum at the site of the palace ruins. Unfortunately this has yet to happen. The ruins have been over-restored, making it difficult to distinguish between the original buildings and newer walls and staircases constructed for tourists.

chen po—see chapter four for more details) and images of Lha btsun chen po himself. It was also 'Jigs med dpa' bo who established the iconography associated with Lha btsun chen po. Lha btsun chen po is almost always shown as a blue figure holding a skull and thigh-bone trumpet. This depiction is based on a story concerning 'Jigs med dpa' bo's discussion with an elderly Sikkimese woman during his stay in Shar phyogs pad phug (near Ravang la), south Sikkim (335). The story goes that whilst on his way from Tibet, he flew over a gorge that lay on his way into Sikkim, he suffered from serious frostbite which turned his body a blue-black colour from damaged nerve endings and burst blood vessels. This story continues that he disappeared for a number of days. Fearing that he had died, his disciples began the construction of a stupa to honour him, but on hearing Lha btsun chen po's thigh-bone trumpet abandoned their work to receive their teacher (see chapter two for more details); hence the blue colour and thigh bone trumpet in the iconography.

The elevation of Lha btsun chen po as Sikkim's premier saint and religio-cultural hero may provide some reasons for the construction of Lha btsun chen po's position in Sikkimese state formation. In *JPKB* (243 Line 2)[19] it is noted that "Lha btsun chen po blessed and opened the hidden land of Sikkim and that he enthroned the first king of Sikkim Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, and thanks to the establishment of the Mon pa in the ten laws of the Buddha's virtues (effected by Lha btsun chen po) the state gradually became peaceful and full of bliss." In chapter five it was shown that Lha btsun chen po was involved in an enthronement ritual. However, this was after the initial religious enthronement carried out by Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin. Indeed in section two of that chapter (pages 137–141) it was argued that Lha btsun chen po's involvement in an enthronement ritual did not mark the start of the Sikkimese dynasty (as Phun tshogs rnam rgyal had already begun the suppression of independent regions in western Sikkim) but instead marked some other form of official occasion. Indeed it seems that the region of Yog bsam was quite an important Lepcha stronghold in the seventeenth century, and the repeated performance of royal rituals there may have been a means to consolidate Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's

[19] *Kun bzang rnam rgyal* [this is another name for Lha btsun chen po] *gyi* [*sic*] *sbas gnas chen po'i sgo phye/ rgyal po phun tshogs rnam rgyal rgyal sar mnga' gsol/ mon pa rnams dge ba bcu'i khrims la bkod pa'i mthus gangs can rim bde byung 'dug/.*

position. Furthermore, it should be remembered that during ceremonial occasions the practice of offering *maṇḍala*s, the symbols of the *cakravātin* and the eight auspicious symbols, were common for high lamas throughout Tibet.[20]

With this in mind it is possible to identify the initial shift in the construction of Sikkimese historical narratives. It is also clear that with the declining fortunes of the Mnga' bdag tradition in Sikkim and the rise of Lha btsun chen po in the Sikkimese imagination (caused by the domination of Sikkimese religious life by 'Jigs med dpa' bo and Padma yang rtse monastery) had a huge impact on the interpretation of events surrounding the formation of the Sikkimese state in the seventeenth century. In short, with the Mnga' bdag school largely discredited by the liaison (real or imagined) with Phan bde dbang mo, the Lha btsun tradition benefited from the arrival of 'Jigs med dpa' bo: his strong connections with the Tibetan state, and the coincidence of his arrival with the aftermath of the tumultuous events of the War of Succession, were able to reshape the religious map of Sikkim, with Padma yang rtse at the centre. This was accompanied by the construction of Lha btsun chen po as a religious and historical hero credited with the formation of the Sikkimese state and the introduction of Buddhism. These radical changes in the perception and interpretation of early Sikkimese history were to be reproduced in a later period, at a time when the very foundations of Sikkimese society and political life were challenged by the involvement of the British in Himalayan affairs.

3. Sikkim in Trouble: The Construction of Historical Narratives

From the deaths of the fourth Chos rgyal 'Gyur med rnam rgyal in 1734 and 'Jigs med dpa' bo in 1735 until the appearance of the British in Sikkimese affairs in 1817, Sikkim was wracked by internal and international conflict. The first major conflict in this period resulted from the disputed succession following the death of 'Gyur med rnam rgyal. According to traditional Sikkimese history 'Gyur med rnam rgyal fell

[20] I myself have witnessed this practice on numerous occasions during rituals in Sikkim, and in particular during visits of the Dalai Lama. On one occasion a Tamang monastery (located below my residence in Gangtok) was being consecrated by HH the Dalai Lama, and before the consecration ritual began the leading monks of the monastery and other sponsors made these ritual offerings to him.

ill in 1733 and, as he had no heir, was asked by his ministers who should succeed him to which he stated that he had made a nun from Gsang sngags chos gling monastery pregnant and that the child born by her would be his heir (*BGR*: 95).[21] Traditional historical narratives claim that the child (Rnam rgyal phun tshogs) born to this nun was the legitimate heir of 'Gyur med rnam rgyal and depicts those that objected to the enthronement of this child as usurpers and traitors to the Sikkimese throne. However, it may be the case that those who opposed Rnam rgyal phun tshogs did so because they believed the illegitimate child was not the true son of 'Gyur med rnam rgyal and that Rnam rgyal phun tshogs was being used as a pawn to further the political ambitions of the Lepcha minister Gar dbang (later Phyag mdzod or Chancellor),[22] who was a descendent of Yug mthing A rub (the illegitimate son of the second Chos rgyal).

3.1. *Internal Turmoil: The Sikkimese Civil War (1734–1741)*

Following the death of 'Gyur med rnam rgyal, the Sikkimese Phyag mdzod, named Rta mgrin in traditional narratives, took temporary control of the government and was supported by a number of Tibeto-Sikkimese ministers, he himself being Tibeto-Sikkimese. Phyag mdzod Rta mgrin and his supporters, which included monks from Padma yang rtse and leading ministers like Nor bu mkhyen rtse (Phyag mdzod during the reign of 'Gyur med rnam rgyal), believed that Rnam rgyal phun tshogs was not the true heir to the Sikkimese throne and proposed that the throne should pass to a leading Tibeto-Sikkimese aristocratic

[21] *BGR*: 95. *Gdung 'dzin rgyal sras med pa dang/ de nas ye shu'i 'das lo 1733 rab byung bcu gnyis pa'i chu glang lor chos rgyal 'gyur med rnam rgyal snyun gzhi bzhes te tshab che cher song gshis ser skya blon rigs sogs der 'dus pa rnams nas chos rgyal por sras med pas rje su rgyal sa su yis 'dzin zhes 'o dod kyi zhu ba phul pas chos rgyal dgongs pa gshegs khar/ der 'dus rnams la zhal chems su lho rigs rtag chung dar pa/ gnyer dga' ldan gyi bu mo gsang chos dgon gyi a ni ming chos lha mo zer ba nor 'dzi byed mi zhig yod pa de la ltos gsungs nas dgongs pa zhi bar gshegs 'dug/ de rjes chos rgyal rang nas gsungs ba ji bzhin stag chung dar gyer dga' ldan gyi bu mo des zin 'gyangs zer ba'i rim go/ da lta o nges skyes sa zer bar sras shig 'khrungs pa la chos rgyal rnam rgyal phun tshogs zhes mtshan gsol 'dug bcas/.*

[22] Please note that term 'chancellor' is being used to convey the meaning of head of government and not finance minister as it is currently used in the United Kingdom. *Phyag mdzod* is often translated as treasurer; however, in the Sikkimese case the holder of the office of *Phyag mdzod* had a position similar to the Lord High Chancellors of England as keepers of the great seal of government. Phyag mdzod is one of the three Great offices of State in Sikkim, the others being *mgron gnyer* or Lord Chamberlain and *drung yig chen mo* or Chief Secretary.

family. Meanwhile the Lepcha faction, led by Gar dbang, opposed Phyag mdzod Rta mgrin by supporting the legitimacy of Rnam rgyal phun tshogs and began a rebellion against Rta mgrin's rule of Sikkim. Gar dbang's rebellion proved successful around seven years later (c.1741) when his faction deposed Rta mgrin, who fled to exile in Tibet, where he attempted to lobby the Tibetan government for assistance in his campaign to regain the Sikkimese throne. Similarly Gar dbang (who had temporarily taken Rnam rgyal phun tshogs to Bhutan) lobbied the Tibetans to send a regent to administer Sikkim during the minority of Rnam rgyal phun tshogs.[23] In all likelihood the success of Gar dbang in securing a Tibetan regent in Sikkim resulted from the connections he established when he served as Rta nag (in Gtsang) Rdzong dpon.[24]

The net result of Gar dbang's defeat of Rta mgrin and the establishment of the Tibetan regency was the rise of Gar dbang's family in the politics of Sikkim. During the regency period Gar dbang was promoted to the position of Phyag mdzod and he further solidified his control of Sikkimese politics by arranging the marriage of his daughter to the son of Rnam rgyal phun tshogs and future Chos rgyal of Sikkim, Bstan 'dzin rnam rgyal, c.1780. This ultimately led to the rise of the Lepcha aristocracy of the 'Bar phung clan and the decline of the Tibeto-Sikkimese aristocracy (Mullard and Wongchuk, 2010: 6–11).

3.2. *An Unresolved War: Sikkim, China and Nepal*

Sikkim and the Sikkimese throne remained relatively weak until the early decades of the nineteenth century. The weakness of the state and of the royal family in particular was caused in part by the dominant position of Gar dbang and his family in domestic and international politics, as well as by the changing geo-political situation in Tibet and

[23] In PD/9.5/003 which is a 'memoir' written by Phyag mdzod Gar dbang in 1759 the passage (line 29–30) regarding the Tibetan regent of Sikkim, Rab brtan shar pa, is slightly confusing but the first part of the passage which deals with the enthronement of Rnam rgyal phun tshogs is clear. It reads: *de rjes rgyal sras 'brug tu gdan drang* [sic. dga' ldan] *gzhung sa chen po nas ras brtan* [sic rab brtan] *shar pa*[s] *'bras ljongs rgyal por mnga' gsol*. "After that the prince was enthroned as the Sikkimese king in Bhutan by Rab brtan shar pa [who was sent] by the great government of Tibet".

[24] Gar dbang was appointed rdzong dpon in the early 1720s (NIT: 35). Further details of this period can be found in PD/9.5/003. On his appointment as rdzong dpon to Rta nag he writes (lines 25–26): *yab ma'i* [sic pa'i] *dus kyi rta nag gi rdzong dpon du bkrin skyang ba dang*. "[I] continued [with the] favour [of the king] the position of Rta nag rdzong dpon of my father's time" i.e. he served in the service of the Chos rgyal as the rdzong dpon of Rta nag as his father had done before him.

the Himalaya. The expansionist policy of Nepal in the late eighteenth century had a huge impact on the political fortunes of Sikkim and her later relations with the British. Before addressing Anglo-Sikkimese relations in the nineteenth century as a background to the development of historical narratives in Sikkim, it may first prove useful to address the period of Nepalese expansion and the effects this had on Sikkim.

The earliest references to Sikkimese possessions in what is now eastern Nepal date to the 1650s, with the first record being *NGR*. In that source (see page 582 of the Tibetan text in appendix V and chapter four page 98), the Magar king Hindu Phate is said to have donated one hundred taxpayers in the region of Kakobhari to Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, which may then have been incorporated into the Sikkimese state. Later sources are clearer about the regions in eastern Nepal that, at the very least, had tax obligations to the Sikkimese throne. There are a number of documents in the Sikkimese palace archive, such as PD/9.3/001, which detail the taxes collected by Sikkim in what is now eastern Nepal in the eighteenth century.[25] Another document (PD/9.5/004) which is dated 1779 is a royal notification from Sikkim to the people of Morang in Nepal informing them that the Chos rgyal had appointed a man named Padma Rig 'dzin as the new tax collector for the region. This implies that the relationship between Morang in Nepal and Sikkim may have been a little more formalised than that of a tribute giving region. Indeed, given that in Sikkim certain levels of tax collectors had hereditary claims over the land they collected taxes from (Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 4–6), this notification which indicates a level of centralised authority, implies that Morang may have been more integrated into the Sikkimese state than has been believed.

Whatever the precise relationship between Sikkim and eastern Nepal may have been (and more research needs to be carried out which compares sources from Sikkim as well as Nepal), it is clear that by the 1780s and 1790s Sikkim came under extreme pressure from the eastward expansion of the Gorkha kingdom. Most sources claim that the first invasion of Sikkim took place in 1774,[26] though in all likeli-

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[25] There is some doubt over the date of this document. The document gives the date of 1778, but it may be possible that this is the year of the Nepali calendar (Vikram samvat), which would equate to c.1721.

[26] The confusion in the date of the invasion of Sikkim is based on the Sikkimese view that all the regions east of the Arun were Sikkimese territory. It should be noted

hood this date refers to the expansion of the Gorkhas into the territory Sikkim claimed rather than the Sikkimese taxable regions of eastern Nepal.[27] The actual invasion of the boundaries of modern Sikkim coincided with the Sino-Nepalese war of 1788–1792, which was caused by a number of factors including high tariffs on trans-Himalayan trade through Nepal, the devaluation of the Tibetan currency and the opening of the Chumbi valley trade route between Tibet and Sikkim as a means of avoiding Nepalese trade tariffs (Pradhan 1991: 130–131). Most studies of this war have been written from the Chinese/Tibetan or Nepali perspective, both of which fail to take into consideration the role of the Sikkimese in this war. There is a degree of confusion as to what actually happened in Sikkim during the war, though, for the most part, it seems almost certain that the Gorkhas did invade Sikkim and captured most of the Sikkimese territory up to the Tista river including all of the modern districts of South and West Sikkim as well as Darjeeling, which gave Nepal and Bhutan a common border. Ultimately the Sikkimese rallied under Tshangs rin 'dzin (who was subsequently killed)[28] and Yug phyogs thub, who succeeded in pushing the Gorkhas back across the border.

The Sikkimese Palace archives contain a number of documents from this period regarding Sikkimese involvement in the war, including a couple of military dispatches between the commander of Chinese forces and Yug phyogs thub, son of Gar dbang and Sikkimese military general. In one such document (PD/9.5/006) the Chinese authorities request Yug phyogs thub to maintain a military presence on the Nepal-Sikkim border, with the additional request that Yug phyogs thub lead the Sikkimese army into Nepal in the event of Nepal invading Tibet. The letter implies that if the Nepalese invade Tibet they would leave their right flank exposed, allowing the Sikkimese to penetrate deep into Nepal to open an eastern front, divert Gorkha troops towards the east and thus allow the Chinese forces to re-group and

that the 1774 date coincides with the signing of the Limbu-Gorkha treaty which ceded much of this territory east of the Arun River to the Gorkha kingdom. For details on the eastern expansion of the Gorkha kingdom see Pradhan 1991, Stiller 1973, Regmi 1999 and Bajracharya 1992.

[27] It should be noted that Sikkim claimed in the Sino-Nepalese peace treaty negotiations of 1792 that the boundary of Sikkim was as far west as the Arun River, whereas all sources seem to indicate that Morang, Ilam and Taplejung districts of modern Nepal was about the extent of Sikkimese influence in Eastern Nepal.

[28] For details see Mullard 2003b.

launch a counter-attack into Nepal. In another dispatch (PD/6.1/004) Yug phyogs thub and other Sikkimese generals are asked to rendezvous with the Chinese general to coordinate the invasion of Nepal. As well as fighting with and for the Chinese military command Yug phyogs thub also sent forces south and west into Bhutan to protect the southern flank as well as the Bhutanese military. The important role Yug phyogs thub played during this war has yet to be recognised in studies of this period, and the palace documents seem to suggest that his role was not merely a regional one but was actually part of the Chinese military strategy. His role was subsequently rewarded by the governments of Tibet, who granted him Ri nag, an estate on the Chumbi-Sikkim-Bhutan border (see document PD/9.5/005 in Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 224), Bhutan, who granted him an estate in Ri shi and Dam bzang near Kalimpong (see document PD/9.5/007 in Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 225), and Sikkim who promoted him to the position of Phyag mdzod or chancellor.

Whilst the role of Sikkimese generals in the Sino-Nepalese war seems to have been important, in the eventual outcome Sikkim failed to receive the rewards it had hoped for and in fact made considerable losses as a result of the final peace treaty between China and Nepal. In the peace treaty (PD/6.1/003 Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 140) Nepal retained possession of all Sikkimese territory up to the Tista river (modern West, and South Sikkim districts as well as Darjeeling district minus Kalimpong sub-division) despite the fact that Sikkim had already re-captured these lands. The Chinese attempted to placate the Sikkimese, who were obviously outraged by the treaty, in a number of correspondences such as PD/6.1/006, which states that the Sikkim-Nepal border have been delimited but if Sikkim and Nepal dispute the border the borders established during the time of the sixth Dalai Lama would be reinstated (this would have benefitted the Sikkimese); and PD/6.1/007 from the Chinese Amban to the Sikkimese government, which attempted to buy-off the Sikkimese with expensive gifts. The Sikkimese, were probably quite unhappy about the situation as the Chinese had no intention of re-opening treaty negotiations, which may have had the result of increasing conflict between Nepal and China/Tibet. However, the unintended result of this was the growing resentment Sikkim felt towards China/Tibet and Nepal and the desire of Sikkim to reclaim its possessions no matter what. The opportunity to exact revenge on Nepal and cause China concern (although this may not have been the Sikkimese intention) came with the Anglo-Gorkha

War, where Sikkim could reclaim its possessions west of the Tista and ignore Chinese requests to avoid contact with the British.

3.3. *Anglo-Sikkimese Relations*

The Anglo-Gorkha War of 1814–1816 marks the start of Anglo-Sikkimese relations. This war was, for the British, primarily about trans-Himalayan trade and the British-Indian desire to open Tibet (and to a lesser extent the Chinese interior) to Indian and British products. Sikkimese involvement in this war, however, was based on the assurances that the territory to the west of the Tista would be returned to Sikkim and that the British would supply arms to Sikkim. According to most Anglo-centric interpretations of this war, the Sikkimese did not provide actual military support but were simply kept on side by the British to open an alley for communications with Tibet and China in order to allay Chinese fears of British actions in Nepal (Lamb 1986: 34). Whilst, the primary role of Sikkim was to maintain diplomatic links between China and British India, documents from the Sikkimese Palace archives have recently come to light which show that the Sikkimese were involved militarily. These documents, such as PD/9.2/001, provide detailed information about Sikkim's military role during this war. The main area in which the Sikkimese army were involved was the region around Nag ri, which corresponds roughly to the area around modern Darjeeling and parts of Morang. According to PD/9.2/001 and PD/9.5/009, the Sikkimese pushed the Gorkhas from Nag ri and took possession of a fort in the region and held it until the British reinforced the Sikkimese with additional ammunition and weapons. The Sikkimese held this fort and prevented the Gorkhas from launching a counter attack through Nag ri into Bengal, whilst a British force penetrated into Nepal via Morang.

With the successful defeat of the Gorkhas in 1816 and the signing of the Treaty of Titalia with the Sikkimese, which restored the Sikkimese territories lost during the Sino-Nepalese War of 1788–1792, it was anticipated that Anglo-Sikkimese relations would flourish (Lamb 1986: 68). Indeed, from the Sikkimese point of view Anglo-Sikkimese relations up until 1835 were considered positively despite a number of setbacks before completely breaking down. There were a number of reasons for the breakdown in relations, some of which were the internal political problems of Sikkim; others were grounded in a declining interest in Sikkimese affairs by key members of the East India Company.

For the British the primary reason for establishing relations with Sikkim was the potential for trans-Himalayan trade and following the end of the Gorkha war it appeared that the greatest hope for success could be found in Kumaon and Garwhal in the western Himalaya.[29] This decline in interest in Sikkim led to increased Sikkimese displeasure with the British as can be attested to by a number of key sources from the palace archives. Although Sikkim kept communications between the British and the Chinese open the British began to renege on some of their promises made during the Anglo-Gorkha War such as arms sales to Sikkim (PD/7.1/001). However, the major crisis in Anglo-Sikkimese relations was the British response to the Ko Ta pa rebellion from 1826 onwards as the Sikkimese felt that the British were not upholding their side of the Treaty of Segowlee which specifically protected Sikkim from Nepali aggression.[30]

The Ko Ta pa rebellion was a classic Sikkimese internal political dispute born out of the growing domination of Sikkimese politics by the 'Bar phung clan. The early reign of the seventh Chos rgyal Gtsug phud rnam rgyal was characterised by the extension of the puppet rule established by Gar dbang following the defeat of Rta mgrin in c.1741. From that time, with the exception of the Tibetan regency periods, Sikkim was ruled, in affect by Gar dbang and his descendents whilst the Chos rgyals were kept in power solely because of the legitimacy they added to the government. The reality was the Chos rgyals were little more than puppet rulers. The 'Bar phung family managed to rule in this way until around 1826, when Gtsug phud rnam rgyal, who had already begun the process of ruling himself, had Phyag mdzod Bo lod (the youngest son of Gar dbang) executed on grounds of treason.[31] The sons of Ko

[29] Lamb 1986: 39. Alastair Lamb correctly notes that the failure of the British to capitalise on the positive relations established with the Sikkimese caused the British long term problems after it became apparent that the Sikkim route was the only viable route into Tibet.

[30] Article VI of that treaty reads: *The Rajah of Nipal* [sic] *engages never to molest or disturb the Rajah of Sikkim in the possession of his territories; but agrees, if any different shall arise between the state of Nipal and the Rajah of Sikkim, or the subjects of either, that such differences shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Government by which award the Rajah of Nipal engages to abide.*

[31] For details on the assassination of Bo lod see Sprigg 2004a and b in Moktan (ed) 2004: 225–236 *NIT* makes many references to the Ko Ta pa rebellion and states that it was on account of Bo lod's "insufferable pride" that Gtsug phud rnam rgyal had him assassinated. The real reason can also be found between the lines of that work in that he "forgot his allegiance so far as to presume to use the red seal and generally mis-

Ta kun dga' (the brother of Bo lod) objected to the assassination and led a rebellion against Gtsug phud rnam rgyal (Mullard and Wonchuk 2010: 103).[32] The Ko Ta brothers fled to Ilam (their patrimonial estate) and made contact with the Gorkhas, who supported their insurrection (PD/4.2/013) by holding Sikkimese prisoners in Nepal (see PD/4.2/008 and PD/4.2/010 for details). In response to Gorkha involvement the Sikkimese government wrote to the British, specifically Lloyd, in 1828 (PD/4.2/002 is a copy of this letter) asking the British to rectify this issue with particular reference to the loss of revenue in taxation from the Gorkha/Ko Ta pa held lands of Morang.

The British responded by supplying the Sikkimese with arms and money in 1831, but this was a case of a little too late. Meanwhile in 1832 the Chinese and Tibetan authorities had been asked to intervene, and a representative was sent from Phag ri to negotiate with the Ko Ta pa and Gorkhas in 1832 but were prevented from entering Sikkim by supporters of the Ko Ta pa, who set up a blockade of the main pass (PD/4.2/013b) and the Gorkha government apparently refused entry to Chinese or Tibetan officials to the Nepal border region (as attested to in PD/4.2/016). In the end, the Tibetan and Chinese opted to send an order demanding that the Ko Ta pa and their supporters cease their activities and re-join the Sikkimese fold (PD/4.2/013a); an order which was ignored by the Ko Ta pa. The British only got involved during the negotiations to settle the dispute, which was considered pro-Sikkimese by the Gorkha officials (PD/4.2/016) but in actuality benefitted the Gorkhas by designating the Sikkim-Nepal boundary at the Mechi River; ceding Morang and Ilam to Nepal but returning Darjeeling to Sikkim. The Sikkimese were not totally convinced that the British were acting impartially, as were the Tibetans who wrote in a letter to the Sikkimese that the British were actually supporters of the Ko Ta pa (PD/4.2/006). This general mistrust felt by the Sikkimese

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appropriated every income to satisfy his own selfish wants." In essence Bo lod ruled as if he were the Chos rgyal, a treasonable offence.

[32] There is also a local account which states that Bo lod's two sons fled to Rdzong dgu, where they remained in hiding for twelve years. Today near Kabi (the ancestral home of Bo lod) is a man who claims descent from one of Bo lod's sons. He goes by the name of Tateng (Bkra steng) Kazi, though it should be noted that his claim to that title is disputed by another branch of the 'Bar phung clan, who descend from A mthing yongs grags (brother of Bo lod, who remained loyal to the king). It has been argued that his son was given Bkra steng by the king as a reward for his loyalty (Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 9–10).

towards the British was exacerbated, when in the early 1830s the British began requesting a portion of the Darjeeling hills for a sanatorium. In this request the British were being duplicitous, as the British had already secured a land grant from the Ko Ta pa,[33] which undoubtedly put pressure on the Sikkimese to provide a land grant to the British, which they duly did in 1835.[34] The ceding of Darjeeling to the British had a lasting impact on not only Anglo-Sikkimese relations which fell into a steep decline after 1835, but also on Sikkim's relations with Tibet, China and Bhutan.

The key factor in the decline of Anglo-Sikkimese relations was the total misunderstanding of what the Darjeeling land grant meant to both the British and the Sikkimese. The British assumed that the land grant meant that Darjeeling had become sovereign British territory, whereas the Sikkimese understood this land grant according to Sikkimese land law. In Sikkimese law land grants were issued to leading families in exchange for annual rents (based on the tax yield of an estate, which could change depending upon the annual income of an estate),[35] loyalty to the Sikkimese throne (including the recognition of the supremacy of the Chos rgyal's rights over the land) and adherence to Sikkimese law. A failure to uphold any of these conditions could

[33] NIT: 60 states: *the Kotapas* [sic] *rebels, who presumed to claim Darjeeling as their patrimonial lands, and to make* [sic] *a voluntary gift of it to Major Lloyd.*

[34] There exists some confusion over a clause inserted into this treaty by the British, the contents of which ensured the cession of Darjeeling to the British. It is noted in *GoS*: 20 thus: *it was resolved by Government to open negotiations with the Maharaja of Sikhim* [sic] *for the cession of Darjeeling to the British Government…This opportunity occurred in 1834–35, when Lepcha refugees in Nepal* [the Ko Ta pa] *made an inroad into the Sikhim Terai, and Colonel Lloyd was deputed to enquire into the causes of the disturbance. The refugees were obliged to return to Nepal, and the negotiation ended in the unconditional cession by the Maharaja of the Darjeeling tract* [.] This account is illustrative of a number of things. First, it was hardly needed for Lloyd to be deputed to "enquire into the cause of the disturbance" as the British had been notified of the Ko Ta pa rebellion by a number of sources which included letters from the Sikkimese king (PD/4.2/002 [written to Lloyd in 1828] PD/4.2/011, and PD/4.2/019) as well as Kazi Gorok in 1828 (see Sprigg 2004a: 225–232) and the eyewitness accounts requested by Lloyd in 1828 of the murder of Bo lod (Sprigg 2004b: 234–236). Second it is clear that the Ko Ta pa rebellion gave the British the pretext to insert themselves (as per the treaties of Segowlee and Titalia) and use their position as arbitrator to secure the cession of Darjeeling.

[35] In theory taxes could go up and down depending on the strength of agricultural yields, the increase or decrease of the number of taxable households and on new markets or new trade/business ventures.

(and did in the past) result in the forfeiture of land.[36] The British failed to understand this and so believed Darjeeling was sovereign British territory, in which British law would prevail and not the rule of the Chos rgyals of Sikkim. Another key point of contention was the rapid development and expansion of Darjeeling coupled with the encroachment of the British onto Sikkimese territory. According to Sikkimese law if land that was previously unused was cleared and developed taxes still applied on those new lands but at a reduced rate than on established plots.[37] However, the Sikkimese were given the impression by the British authorities that Darjeeling would only be used as a sanatorium for British officials to escape the heat and diseases of the Indian plains and not as a forward platform for the expansion of British influence in Tibet and the Himalaya.

The rapid economic development of Darjeeling as British territory surrounded by Sikkimese land on all sides caused the flight of numerous Sikkimese *mi ser*, who fled harsh conditions in Sikkim to join the expanding labour market and cash economy present in Darjeeling. The Sikkimese demanded the return of the *mi ser*, who were considered criminals under Sikkimese law—a demand the British flatly refused, believing the conditions of the Sikkimese commoners to be tantamount to slavery.[38] Similarly, criminals from British territory often sought refuge in Sikkim. These and other conflicts between Darjeeling and Sikkim, which were largely based on cultural misunderstandings, caused a cooling in Anglo-Sikkimese relations, the capture and imprisonment of Campbell and Hooker in 1849, and the seizure of all Sikkimese territory south of the Rangit (in 1850) by the British in revenge, which according to the Gam pa treaty amounted to a loss of Sikkimese revenue to the amount of Rs. 46,000 (See Mullard 2010 and Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 98).[39] This was followed by the

[36] For details on Sikkimese land law see Mullard and Wongchuk 2010: 4–12.

[37] Ibid.

[38] There are a number of documents in the Palace collection detailing the correspondence between the British and Sikkimese. It appears that the British either failed to comprehend Sikkimese land law or chose to ignore it. Given the numerous documents written by the Chos rgyal such as PD/1.1/020 (written in 1860) informing the *bcu dpon* not to abuse the *mi ser*, but abide by government rules on torture and corporal punishment, indicates that there was widespread abuse of commoners.

[39] The British themselves state that the reason for the occupation of Sikkimese territory was in response to the imprisonment of Hooker and Campbell in 1949 (*GoS*: iv).

occupation of Sikkim in 1860–1861 and the signing of the Tumlong Treaty of 1861.[40]

This treaty guaranteed British supremacy in Sikkim. The provisions of the treaty gave the British the right to construct a road into Sikkim, which the Sikkimese were required to maintain and to construct rest houses along the route. The "Pagla Dewan"[41] was banished from Sikkim, while trade monopolies and tariffs on British goods were abolished and the right of movement for Sikkimese *mi ser* and British officials was established. British suzerainty over Sikkimese foreign affairs was in affect guaranteed by clause 17, which gave the British the right to arbitrate disputes with Sikkim's neighbours, and Sikkim could not sell or lease land without British approval. In addition the Chos rgyal was required to reside in Sikkim for at least nine months a year and found a permanent capital in Sikkim ("Treaty of Tumloong" [*sic*] in Moktan 2004: 12–16). This was because the Chos rgyals of Sikkim had a summer residency in the Chumbi Valley, which (as far as the British were concerned) lay outside of Sikkim's border. The final domination of Sikkim by the British occurred in 1888, after British troops expelled a Tibetan army from Lungtu, established the office of the Sikkimese Political Officer, the first being J.C. White, who took control of the Sikkimese government. British ascendency in Sikkim was finally recognised by the Britain-China Convention on the seventeenth of March 1890 and by the inappropriately named Sikkim-Tibet Convention[42] of the fifth of December 1893.[43]

[40] A Tibetan version of this treaty has recently been discovered in the Sikkimese Palace archive (see Mullard and Wongchuk, 2010). It has also been the subject of a paper presented by Alex McKay at the 12th IATS conference in 2010 and which is currently in press.

[41] The British considered the "Pagla Dewan" (Mgron gnyer rnam rgyal) as a bastion of Tibetan interests and largely blamed him for the imprisonment of Campbell and Hooker and for Sikkimese hostility to the British. The "Pagla Dewan", whose was given this name meaning "Crazy Prime Minister" by the British, was considered a relative of the Chos rgyal on account of his wife bearing the Chos rgyal an illegitimate child, and held considerable political leverage over the government from c.1840–1861.

[42] Despite being called the Sikkim-Tibet convention neither Sikkimese nor Tibetan representatives took part in neither the negotiations nor the signing of the agreement, which was signed by British and Chinese officials.

[43] Copies of both conventions can be found in Moktan 2004: 27–31.

3.4. *The Construction of Historical Narratives*

It was in this period of British expansion in the Sikkimese Himalaya that a number of Sikkimese histories were written. One of the first histories was appended to a petition sent to the British in 1819 (SMPd79). This included a brief history of Sikkim from the settlement of Tibetans in Sikkim until the Gorkha invasion. Another key history was *Bla ma che*[44] *mtshan gsum 'bras ljongs sbas gnas phebs* (hereafter *BMS*), written c.1860, which clearly identified the key themes found within later Sikkimese histories such as the *Gling mo chronicle* (1899) and most importantly *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (*BGR*), written in 1908 but based on an earlier history by the Brag dkar pa family. The advance of Sikkimese historical writing even had a huge impact on British accounts of Sikkimese history, notable amongst which was *GoS*.

The fact that numerous historical accounts were written during the British period is due to two considerations. The first is the impact of the British on Sikkimese life and interpretations of their culture, religion and history. The second is that a number of earlier histories, including a history from Padma yang rtse, were either lost or destroyed in the course of Sikkim's tumultuous history or due to climatic conditions and insects. What is clear is that there was a large-scale production of Sikkimese histories during the British period. However, this did not necessarily mean the adoption of western historical methods, with many of these works based on oral accounts, religious historical accounts and myths; both in the conventional sense and in the way described by Lincoln (1989: 24). Indeed, Sikkim's literary traditions, like those of Tibet, were largely dominated by religious scholars, who interpreted history in accordance with their religious beliefs or idealised notions of Tibetan religio-political theories. The result is a style of historiography that highlights religious interpretations and the dominant ideas of the time, with no attempt to engage in either critical thinking or interpretation of historical material. This led to the construction of historical narratives which see the emergence of the Sikkimese state as the fruition of divine prophecy, and which drew upon the accounts of 'Jigs med dpa' bo with regard to the role of Lha btsun chen po in state formation. Indeed with the solidification of Padma

[44] Recte: *mched.*

yang rtse's position as the primary religious tradition came the promotion of an orthodox historical narrative, which over time became accepted and repeated in the histories of the 19th and 20th centuries, including the royal history *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (*BGR*).

In contemporary Sikkim *BGR* is revered as the authentic history of Sikkim, and local historians often quote from it extensively and uncritically. What they fail to realise is that histories, especially those sanctioned by governments, are often written for specific purposes, and *BGR*, it has to be said, is one such example as far as its documentation of early Sikkimese state formation is concerned.[45] Firstly, it should be known that its authorship was attributed to the King and Queen of Sikkim, who themselves had been put under house arrest by the Political Officer of Sikkim J.C. White, and then exiled to Kalimpong (*NIT*: 101) while he virtually ruled the country.[46] This fact alone indicates the likelihood that the Royal family sanctioned this work as a presentation of Sikkim's side of history and was therefore susceptible to bias. Indeed it is possible to read the proliferation of Sikkimese histories during the British period and *BGR* as an attempt to define Sikkim as a nation; i.e. the interpretation of history as the process to nationhood. With that process comes the invention of tradition as discussed by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) or as Ernst Renan remarked that "forgetting, I would even go as far as saying, historical error is a crucial factor in the creation of nations" (11 March 1882). As the point of nation building, as opposed to the formation of states, is to create a shared history or culture and by extension identity which can be considered to represent the identity of the territorial nation-state (and that this creation is often a conscious one) it is not surprising to find the same thing happening in the Sikkimese context.

In the Sikkimese example it is understandable why this construction of a national historical narrative was important and perhaps, in the historical period of its creation, justified. Not only had the Chos

[45] *BGR* is actually quite a good source for the study of British involvement in Sikkim and for understanding Sikkimese reaction to the establishment of the British protectorate in Sikkim. As such a distinction needs to be made between the earlier periods of history in documents and the later British periods and the usefulness of this source depends on the period one is studying.

[46] Sources from the Sikkimese Palace archive illustrate this fact, which has already been documented in the writings of Balikci (2008: 47–48 she describes some of the laws and taxes White introduced) and McKay (1997: 10, where McKay notes that White's appointment as Political officer gave him virtual "control over Sikkim").

rgyal and Rgyal mo been held as virtual prisoners of the British, the position of Sikkim as an independent state was also in doubt, and *BGR* was almost certainly written to counter claims to British suzerainty over Sikkim by portraying an independent history spanning 650 years, from the time of Gyad 'bum sags until 1908. Yet, like the invention of tradition or the "crucial factor" in the construction of a nation as described by Renan, the first causalities of this project of creating a national history were historical methodology and source criticism, with old accounts, religious bias and oral histories narrated as historical facts, providing that they a) did not challenge the validity of the historical narratives and b) undermine the idea of Sikkim as a nation. These religious biases and oral histories remain largely unchallenged by local historians (with only a few exceptions) or those interested in history, largely because of the fact that *BGR* is attributed to a Chos rgyal and his wife. Indeed in recent years there have been numerous publications and re-publications of this work in English and Tibetan, and the accounts in *BGR* have found their way into the works of serious scholars (from non-historical fields), and even in a number of recent histories written in Tibetan.[47]

4. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide a possible explanation for the substantial difference between "official" narratives regarding Sikkimese state formation and sources from the seventeenth century. I have argued that the War of Succession, which caused the flight of the third Chos rgyal Phyag rdor rnam rgyal to Tibet, had a huge impact on the development of these historical narratives. This event caused the expansion of the Lha btsun tradition in Sikkim, through the work of his third incarnation 'Jigs med dpa' bo. By the death of the third Chos rgyal in 1717, the position of Padma yang rtse monastery and the Lha btsun tradition were established as the primary religious school in Sikkim. With this came a period of consolidation and reinterpretation

[47] The notable of which are Steinmann 1998, Rose 1990, Rock 1953 and in Tibetan Mkhan po Chos dbang, 2003. It should be remembered that *BGR* is still a useful text for the study of the period following the establishment of British rule in Sikkim following the Lungtu incident of 1888. Although still subject to bias it provides an important understanding of the way in which British actions in Sikkim had an impact on the Sikkimese ruling elite.

of Sikkimese history, where the role of Lha btsun chen po in state formation was enhanced and the position of Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin was diminished. With this came a religious interpretation of history that saw the proselytising activities of Tibetan lamas—who had actually fled to Sikkim to escape political persecution—as the fulfilment of the divine prophecies of Guru Rinpoche.

These ideas were later incorporated into the historical works of the 19th and 20th centuries, as a response to the British presence, and as part of the process of creating the first national histories for Sikkim. The works were aimed at highlighting the historical independence of Sikkim and presenting a picture of national unity in the process of the country's crystallisation: portraying early state formation as a peaceful and generally accepted transition with the state being created, not for the usual political reasons, but for the benefit of Buddhism and by extension all sentient beings, in accordance with the prophecies of Guru Rinpoche.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION: REMARKS ON SIKKIMESE STATE FORMATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

For the most part, Sikkim's past is shrouded in mystery. From archaeological finds it is clear that this region has been occupied by humans engaging in agriculture since c. 10,000 BCE (see chapter one pages 5–9), and providing we accept van Driem's argument that early *Lho skad* speakers first migrated to Sikkim from the Tibetan plateau in the ninth century of the common era (1998: 84), there remains a vast expanse of time before this region made a mark on the written record. Indeed the earliest sources mentioning Sikkim appear in the religious text ascribed to the first Tibetan Buddhist missionaries to travel to Sikkim: Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can (1337–1408) and Kaḥ thog pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b.1466). Prior to that Sikkim was part of the large region untamed by Tibetan or any other 'civilisation'; it was included in the southern 'barbarian' realm of Lho mon (yul). Scott, in his recent book has begun a very interesting project of highlighting history not from state-centric models but from the position of those people who remained outside of states. Not only does he note (correctly) that humans for most of their history have lived not in states but in other systems of organisation, he also states that people have also chosen to live outside of states and because they reject the 'civilisation' ascribed to a state are considered by the state as 'primitive' or 'barbaric', by states in proximity to those populations of non-state peoples (2009: 4–9). He also notes that these non-state spaces, like Childs has argued for hidden lands (1999), were "zones of refuge" from the domination and hegemony of states (Scott 2009: 22) and we can find parallels with those arguments and the study of Sikkim and its history. He raises some key issues which may help to understand Sikkimese history; in particular the lack of states prior to the seventeenth century, or the regions between Sikkim and Bhutan, or Sikkim and Tibet as stateless or semi-stateless spaces. Whilst his argument that too much emphasis has been placed on the study of the history of states, even though those states consisted of the minority of human history and contained within

their borders a minority of the human population, is right; there are problems in his thesis. Namely, how are historians to study the history of a population, when no clues have been left behind for historians to study? Oral histories are not, like 'culture' or 'tradition', stagnant but are ever changing according to the political and social (and sometimes moral) needs of a community at a given time. Similarly, official histories (be they written or oral) are also unreliable, as this book has attempted to show by recourse to the Sikkimese example.

Ultimately this book is a state-centric history, in that it is about how the Sikkimese state was formed. But in my defence, I recognise that the period of human habitation of Sikkim is far larger than the period in which the Sikkimese state existed and I recognise that the challenge of future scholarship will be in trying to understand the unwritten history of Sikkim prior to the establishment of the state in the seventeenth century (see section 2 below). Yet, what is important to remember, is that whilst Sikkim may have been a stateless space for most of its past or a place of refuge from the political or religious turmoil of Tibet, a state was formed and remained, albeit with periods of weakness, in existence at least until the arrival of the British and it could be argued that the modern Indian state of Sikkim is the successor state to that earlier Sikkimese state.

This book has attempted to do two things. Firstly, to show that there was a development of a traditional historical narrative for both the origins of the Sikkimese people and kings and for the state formation of the Sikkimese state. Eventually, these narratives, which began with changes made to the religious history of Sikkim by 'Jigs med dpa' bo and others (see chapter seven pages 165–173), matured into narratives of political identity in opposition to the growing presence of the British in Sikkimese affairs. The second thing this book has attempted to achieve is the first step towards a re-evaluation of the history of state formation in Sikkim. This book has shown that the formation of the Sikkimese state was an ongoing and often protracted affair and that a state does not materialise overnight, but, in fact, takes years to form and then, in most cases, only after the subjugation of other states or proto-states.

Related to the first and second points above, this book has shown that any state formation narrative, whether it be a traditional Sikkimese narrative or an academic historical narrative is, if it attempts to date the formation of a state to a single event, overly simplistic as the example of the coronation conundrum in chapter five has illus-

trated. The formation of the Sikkimese state was the culmination of a process of events and actions, which included legal processes, war, subjugation, introduction of taxation and economic practices, and the social stratification of the Sikkimese population. All of these events and actions made the state functional, yet were not always carried out for that purpose, but as a means to solidify the control and power of the first Sikkimese king. What has also been shown in this book is that the motivation for the formation of the Sikkimese state was not predetermined by religious prophecy, or even by the ruler's desire to create a state, but by something more primitive, more human: the desire to control, establish and maintain power.

1. Historical Narratives and State Formation

One of the key themes in this book is the comparison between what I have termed, 'later historical narratives' and key sources from the period of Sikkimese state formation. Both the approaches of Hobsbawn and Ranger in relation to the invention of tradition and Hayden White's studies of narratives in the historical tradition can be applied to the construction of Sikkimese historical narratives. That Sikkimese history was created, there is no doubt. Hayden White's preoccupation with the deconstruction of the historical method, though far from universal, is applicable in parts to the construction of Sikkimese history. In particular his rejection of narrative as a means of articulating historical events as through narrative the illusion of events 'speaking for themselves' is maintained and constructed as authentic and real (White 1980: 8). His rejection of storytelling in history is particularly relevant to works of Sikkimese history, where the story becomes more important than the events they are supposed to represent. His wider critique of the historical method, however, is problematic. Whilst it is true that 'history' can be manufactured for a number of reasons (political, sociological, personal etc.) it is also true that these manufactured histories can also provide insight. The relevance of a historical narrative does not always lie in whether it can provide a truthful understanding of the past, but rather as a sociological beacon of a society's (or its elite's) ideological parameters, its norms or its values.[1]

[1] This is similar to Lincoln's (1989: 25) definition of myth as a narrative that acts as a blueprint for society.

As far as Sikkimese historical narratives are concerned, whilst they are historically inaccurate they also provide insight into the values of Sikkimese society (or more specifically the values of the elite of Sikkimese society). For this reason I have refrained from attacking these narratives as potential historical sources,[2] choosing to focus my criticism on them as examples of the historical method. In short the problem is not the narratives themselves but the construction of history based on assumption and bias and lack of source criticism. Indeed throughout this book I have attempted to illustrate these problems through the study of sources contemporary to the events they narrate and not rely on historical works because of their perceived authenticity and authority. It is here that the works of Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) are particularly useful with regards to the creation of tradition. A key point they make is that for invented traditions the historical continuity is often manufactured and factitious; being more a reaction to changing circumstances rather than part of historical continuity (Hobsbawn 1983: 2). As far back as the late nineteenth century Ernst Renan discussed the construction of history in relation to the growth of nations and nationalism; whereby history is manufactured to provide historical legitimacy and continuity to the creation of (modern) nation states. Gellner elaborated on the modern origins of nations and nationalism in his seminal work of the same title. There he discussed the theory that nations arose out of modernity as the modern state required a literate workforce and unified modes of articulation. With that came the construction of a shared history where the nation was projected into the past.

It has been shown in this book that something very similar occurred in Sikkim. In this case the construction of the national history of Sikkim was articulated by the religious beliefs held during the time of the history's construction. These beliefs were grounded in the religious traditions of the *sbas yul* and *gter ma* and in particular the idea that the *sbas yul* must be opened by a suitably qualified religious practitioner. This religious idea of the "opening of the *sbas yul*" became synonymous with the process of the formation of the state in Sikkim, as the 'opening' narrative became attached to the 'formation' narrative

[2] Far from it these sources provide a valuable insight into nineteenth and twentieth century Sikkimese history. For historical enquiry of those periods they can be used as primary sources. The problem, however, arises when they are used as primary sources for the study of seventeenth and eighteenth century history.

through the designation of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as one of the 'four yogin brothers', despite the fact there is no evidence that Phun tshogs rnam rgyal can be considered a serious religious practitioner when compared with Lha btsun chen po or Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin. Whilst Phun tshogs rnam rgyal did sponsor religious building programs and received initiations, he was principally a political figure, involved in the expansion of his power. Charles Tilly's comment on the origins of state formation are particularly relevant, in as far as he noted that states were not created for the purpose of state building but as a by-product of a rulers wish to expand his domain, concentrate personal wealth and power. In part, this book has attempted to show that Tilly's approach is more realistic than the narrative of state formation presented in works like *BGR*.

Another theme touched upon in chapters two and three of this book is the role of religious concepts in traditional histories. Ultimately the local historical narratives of Sikkim are grounded in a different world view and methodology from scientific history or the history conducted by academics. These narratives are heavily influenced by the *gter ma* tradition of Tibet and methods used by Tibetan Buddhists in defining the authenticity of that material. One of the first things one notices is the importance of oral history, a subsidiary (though growing) subject in most history departments in the west, and prophecy. This is more important in Sikkim than other areas of Tibet, on account of Sikkim's identity as a hidden land blessed by Guru Rinpoche. It is understandable for history to become distorted when the grounding for historical study is the total acceptance of a religious tradition and the religious interpretation of history.

2. The Next Step: Towards Re-Evaluating Sikkimese History

The comparison, in this book, of traditional Sikkimese historical narratives with seventeenth and eighteenth century sources has illustrated the need for a re-examination of Sikkimese history. Whilst the construction of a new interpretation of early Sikkim is outside the remit of this book, it may prove useful to conclude this current work by highlighting a number of key themes and areas that may contribute towards the re-evaluation of Sikkimese history.

The first topic for re-assessment is the origins and migration patterns of the first Tibetans to Sikkim. Whilst it is clear that a lot of confusion

surrounds the migrations of Tibetans to Sikkim, it is possible to draw some basic conclusions. In the first instance there is a lot of contradictory information on the period in which Tibetans migrated towards Sikkim and on the locations from where in Tibet they migrated. In addition it should be noted that some Tibeto-Sikkimese people claim to have migrated from other parts of the Himalaya such as Bhutan. There seems to be some truth to the Bhutanese migration stories for some clans of Tibeto-Sikkimese. The recent work of Anna Balikci (2008) on the ritual traditions of northern Sikkimese people and the connections with people of the Ha valley of Bhutan seems to suggest if not a Bhutanese origin for northern Tibeto-Sikkimese, than at least a high degree of cultural and ritualistic affinity. As far as Tibetan migration patterns are concerned much is still inconclusive and perhaps instead of trying to ascertain the definitive history of migration we should accept that Sikkim, like much of the Himalaya was, what James Scott would call, a "shatter-zone" for different people fleeing from oppression (be it religious, political or personal) in other regions of Tibet and Bhutan.

That being said, key themes call out for further study, not least the possible Imperial connections between Sikkim and Tibet and the linguistic relationship between Lho skad and Rdzong kha. If the arguments presented in chapter three are eventually accepted, it seems plausible and logical to conclude that Sikkim may well have had some relationship to Imperial Tibet, though that does not mean that Sikkim formed part of the Tibetan Empire, as people may have been fleeing the Empire as refugees rather than exploring the Himalaya as potential colonialists. This means that future historical studies on the migrations of Tibetans to Sikkim should focus on this potential relationship rather than attempting to justify orthodox histories which seem to contradict with wider knowledge of Tibet and the Himalaya. Given that linguists like George van Driem (1998) have already noted the similarities between Lho skad and Rdzong kha and the persistence of ancient phonemes in these languages seems to suggest an early development of those languages. The fact that Driem has dated the migrations of proto-Bhutanese and proto-Sikkimese into Bhutan and Sikkim respectively to the ninth century should serve as a reminder to scholars wishing to argue for a thirteenth century migration, that whilst oral narratives can often represent an unbroken lineage of accurate information, more often than not oral traditions become influenced by the social, political and religious changes in a community over time. On account of this the study of the origins and migrations of Tibetans

to Sikkim must make use of more consistent and diverse sources of information rather than just the oral sources or orally derived written records. Whilst the discussions in this book, have not managed to identify the locations, as it seems clear that there were more than one, from where Tibetans migrated to Sikkim (though it seems a point in eastern Tibet may be one of the first places to look, along with Ha in Bhutan) they seem to suggest a much earlier migration pattern than that presented in traditional narratives. It seems that quite inadvertently, the process of re-assessing the migration history of Sikkim is now in progress.

There still remain a number of unanswered questions in Sikkim's pre-history, if one accepts the ninth century migration argued in this book. One key question is identifying what happened in Sikkim between the ninth century and the fourteenth century when Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can arrived in Sikkim. According to the biographies of this lama, Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can seems surprised to find a group of people speaking Tibetan dialects cut off from the rest of the Tibetan world. Was this really the case or was there consistent contact between Tibet and Sikkim in this period and was his surprise just part of the religious construction of Sikkim as a *sbas yul*? If so can historians put the lack of knowledge of this connection down to an inadequate geographical name for the region of Sikkim or was it that the connection was so localised between Tibetans, in places like Gam pa, and Phag ri (or other areas of the Tibeto-Sikkimese borderlands), and Tibeto-Sikkimese in La chen or other places, that the connection was never documented in bureaucratic records of taxes and income or in Tibetan histories? Answering this question could well have wider implications on Tibetan-Sikkimese relations and the formation of the Sikkimese state and will undoubtedly contribute to our knowledge of Sikkimese history.

2.1. *The State and its Expansion, the Aristocracy, Lepcha and Limbu History, and the British Period*

Whilst considerable work still needs to be done with regards to determining the point of origin of the first and subsequent migrations to Sikkim and in identifying the history of the period between the ninth and fourteenth centuries and fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, seventeenth century Sikkim can now be more adequately understood. The state formation of Sikkim must be understood now as a process rather than a datable event.

It seems clear now that the Sikkimese state emerged out of a network of many small multi-ethnic independent or semi-independent proto-states mainly as the result of war and diplomacy. The religious traditions of early Sikkim played little role in the creation of Sikkim but played a major part in the legitimisation of the young state. The creation of the state was primarily a political event born out of the political desire of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal to extend his personal power and wealth in a way akin to the writings of Charles Tilly. If one understands the state in part as a legitimate power structure; than the creation of Sikkim was only 'completed' with the signing of the *LMT* when the leaders of the various Sikkimese proto-states agreed (having been defeated in a war) to accept the leadership of the Rnam rgyal rulers.

The signing of *LMT* marked an important point in Sikkimese history, and it represents one of the defining and recurrent themes throughout the history of Sikkim: the birth of the aristocracy and the balance of power. In Mullard and Wongchuk (2010) and in this book it has been stated that, in all likelihood the signatories maintained the control of their former proto-states as inheritable estates; forming an aristocratic class in early Sikkim. One question remains: why did the Chos rgyal allow for his enemies to retain control of their estates? The answer to this question must be found in the population size of Sikkim. In appendix III some projections on the population size of early Sikkim are noted and these projections seem to suggest an incredibly small population. In all likelihood the primary concern of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was the expansion and accumulation of his personal power and wealth. Indeed the earliest records from the seventeenth century are taxation records and population registers and with *LMT* in his hands Phun tshogs rnam rgyal was guaranteed a loyal and submissive group of regional leaders who had the experience and local ties to collect taxes peacefully in his name. Ultimately his decision to keep his enemies in place was a political and economic one. Dispossessing all his rivals would have had a significant impact on the economy of Sikkim and its political stability.

If Phun tshogs rnam rgyal simply reduced his enemies to common subjects he may have created resentment amongst those families he demoted. But more than that, there could have been other factors in play such as the loyalty of the common people to their previous lords and so by letting his rivals live even as common subjects would leave potential figures for dissenting citizens to rally around. Similarly simply

killing all his rivals would have such a disrupting effect on the political stability of Sikkim that the simple collection of taxes may have become impossible without the use of further force. Given that the population of Sikkim was so small during this period, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal would have limited resources at his disposal if he were to rely on force as a means of administering his kingdom. If he had followed that method he would have certainly left himself exposed to attack from outside influences or other disgruntled rivals. His decision was ultimately a pragmatic one, one that would ensure the flow of revenue into his hands and placate a group of potential rivals by allowing them autonomy over their estates for if his rivals ever failed to pay taxes or maintain their other obligations Phun tshogs rnam rgyal could have used *LMT* as a way of dispossessing his rivals legitimately; as failure to follow the decrees of the king would be tantamount to breaking the laws enshrined in *LMT*.

Whilst maintaining Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's rivals in positions of power may have had numerous short-term benefits in the long term the lack of a centralised state caused many weaknesses in the administration and survival of Sikkim as a political entity. On account of this weakness, Sikkim was politically fragmented and most of Sikkim's history was characterised by the oscillation of power between the Chos rgyal on the one hand and the aristocracy on the other; as can be seen in the events surrounding the War of Succession (chapter seven). This theme in Sikkimese history has been discussed briefly in Mullard and Wongchuk (2010: 6–10) and further investigations into Sikkim's history may provide a more detailed portrait of the problems of Sikkim's political organisation.

In addition to the relationship between the Chos rgyal and the aristocracy as an area in need of study, is the expansion of the Sikkimese state. Little is known about how Sikkim developed from a state, largely based in western Sikkim, to a state that included (at least within its sphere of influence) areas such as Morang, Ilam, and Wa lung in Nepal; Rdzong dgu, La chen and La chung in North Sikkim; Gangtok and eastern Sikkim, and tax concessions in the Tibetan *rdzong*s of Phag ri, Gam pa and Gting skyes. It is clear that Sikkimese estates in Tibet, can probably be dated to the time of Phyag rdor rnam rgyal's residence in Tibet, but it is unclear when the regions of La chen and La chung, which have their own systems of local governance, or Rdzong dgu, some of the Lepcha people who live there have oral traditions of flight from the growing power of the state in western Sikkim, came

under the authority of the Sikkimese state. Similarly, there needs to be unbiased and politically neutral scholarly studies of the histories of the Lepcha and Limbu people of Sikkim and the surrounding regions.

Another key area in the study of Sikkimese history must be the arrival of the British in the Himalaya and the impact of this on Sikkim, Tibetan-Sikkimese and Sikkimese-Bhutanese relations. In two unpublished papers (Mullard 2009 and Mullard 2010) some initial thoughts regarding the impact of the British on Bhutan and Tibet's relationship with Sikkim have been discussed. Yet more still needs to be done. There are a number of works in circulation which discuss Sikkim and the British (McKay 1997 and Lamb 1986) but these works rely exclusively on British sources, and with the discovery of the Sikkimese Palace Archive and the publication of a catalogue of the contents of that archive (Mullard and Wongchuk 2010), sources from the Sikkimese point of view are now becoming available. Discovery of (or access to) similar collections in Bhutan and Tibet would help to complement the existing material and present the Tibetan and Bhutanese interpretation of the British period and Sikkim's position within this tri-country region.

3. Final Remarks and a Word of Warning

It has been my intention, in this book, to highlight some of the problems with traditional histories in Sikkim, not as a way to destroy the Sikkimese historical tradition, but to illustrate the complex nature of Sikkimese history. I have not attempted to re-write Sikkim's history but only present material which may further our knowledge of the past and hopefully contribute to a further and more detailed study of Sikkimese history than the one presented in these pages. One thing I have been constantly aware of when writing this book is the contemporary Sikkimese situation. Today Sikkim is a state in India (with a population of many different ethnicities), which resulted from its historical relations with British India, and it seems unlikely that this will change any time soon. Sikkim is also plagued by ethnic conflict, inequality and the competing assertions of rival ethnic groups as part of their desire to be recognised, their traditions and histories respected. On account of this climate, a history of Sikkim may become imbued with the aspirations and opinions of a particular ethnic or political group. My intention has been to avoid this at all costs; relying on the evidence

in the sources and comparison with later histories. Whilst the use and abuse of history has not been a subject of this work, it is commonplace in Sikkimese politics today and it is hoped (an author has little control over the use of his work once published—as I have already discovered) that this work will not be used to advance the political aspirations of any ethnic group in contemporary Sikkim. Yet this concern is very real, not only in Sikkim today but in Sikkim of the past. As what are the Sikkimese traditional historical narratives if not a representation of the abuse of history to fit within the prevailing political climate? Whilst many post-structural thinkers may wish to consign history to the dump, as a subjective fictitious subject of little use, the political misuse of history is perhaps one reason why history as an academic discipline is so important. The academic pursuit of history ultimately can serve as a check on the erroneous politically motivated histories which may cause conflict within societies. For it is unlikely that history, in all senses of the word, will come to an end, it will just be reshaped to prevailing political and social concerns.

APPENDICES AND ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

APPENDIX ONE

CHRONOLOGY OF EARLY SIKKIM

1604	Phun tshogs rnam rgyal born
1642	Phun tshogs rnam rgyal becomes ruler according to *LSG* Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin leaves Tibet and arrives in Sikkim
1644	Dmar po lha khang is constructed by Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin. At some point after this date he enthrones Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as Chos rgyal in Sikkim (according to *NGR*)
c.1645	Birth of Karma dar rgyas (Sikkimese *Phyag mdzod* and general of the Sikkimese army during the War of Succession)
1646	In the autumn Lha btsun chen po arrives in Sikkim. La sogs rdzong is completed and the crowned prince Bstan srung rnam rgyal is born there. In the tenth month of this year Lha btsun chen po meets with Phun tshogs Rnam rgyal.
1649	Construction of Rab brtan rtse Palace begins. The territory of Yug mthing was incorporated into the Sikkimese state. Zil gnon monastery built by Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin
1650	According to *BGR* Lha btsun chen po dies.
1651	Bkra shis sdings monastery built by Mnga' bdag phun tshogs rig 'dzin
1654	According to local tradition Lha btsun chen po dies.
1657	Skal bzang blo ldan writes *LSG* in the palace of La sogs.
Late 1650s	Lepcha and Limbu rebellion/war.
1663	Lho Mon Gtsong gsum agreement is signed. This event marks the end of internal conflict in early Sikkim and establishes Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as the dominant force in western Sikkim
c.1670	Bstan srung rnam rgyal enthroned as second Chos rgyal. According to some sources he was enthroned during the

	lifetime of his father the first Chos rgyal. Undoubtedly this led to the smooth transition from one reign to the next.
1675	Last recorded date in *MTB*
1686	Phyag rdor rnam rgyal Born
1697	Sixth Dalai Lama Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho enthroned. This ceremony was attended by Phyag rdor rnam rgyal
c.1697	Phyag rdor rnam rgyal arrives in Lhasa to offer gifts to the sixth Dalai Lama, on the behalf of his father and the Sikkimese Kingdom. (According to *Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho'i thun mong phyi'i rnam thar*)
	Bstan srung rnam rgyal falls ill.
	Inspired by the controversial succession the Bhutanese invade Sikkim for the first time.
	According to local histories the third Chos rgyal (Phyag rdor rnam rgyal) flees to Tibet.
1699	Bstan srung rnam rgyal falls ill and receives medical attention from Tibetan doctors sent by Sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. (according to Lobsang Shastri)
	Third Chos rgyal enthroned.
c.1700–1708	Karma dar rgyas leads the Sikkimese army against the Bhutanese forces.
1707	Birth of Crown prince 'Gyur med rnam rgyal
1709	'Jigs med dpa' bo (the third incarnation of Lha btsun chen po) arrives in Sikkim.
	Phyag rdor rnam rgyal returns from Tibet, inspired by Gter bdag gling pa and 'Jigs med dpa' bo begins reorganization of Sikkimese monastic codes of conduct.
1717	Phyag rdor rnam rgyal dies. According to tradition he was murdered by his sister Phan bde dbang mo
	Phan bde dbang mo assassinated by Sikkimese government in Gnam rtse rdzong.
	A month after the death of the third Chos rgyal his son, 'Gyur med rnam rgyal is enthroned as Chos rgyal by 'Jigs med dpa' bo.
1733	Birth of 'Rnam rgyal phun tshogs supposedly 'Gyur med rnam rgyal's illegitimate son
1734	The fourth Chos rgyal 'Gyur med rnam rgyal dies
1735	'Jigs med dpa' bo dies

APPENDIX TWO

THE CLANS OF SIKKIM

The *Stong sde ru[s] bzhi* has been discussed and enumerated at some length in chapter three. However, it may be useful to enumerate the clans in this group again here.

1. Yul [m]thon pa
2. Gling gsar [sa, zad, zer etc.] pa
3. Zhang dar pa
4. Tshes bcu dar
5. Nyim [nyi ma] rgyal pa
6. Guru bkra shis pa

Babs Mtshan Brgyad

It is worth reminding readers that the *Babs mtshan brgyad* are the only other clans which are considered of pure descent; i.e. descent from the first migration into Sikkim under Gyad 'bum sags. The eight clans and their subdivisions of the *Babs mtshan brgyad* are:

A) Bon po:
  6. Bon po Nag ldig [sdig]
  7. Lha bsung
  8. Yos lcags
  9. Na bon
  10. Bon chung

B) Rgan stag bu tshogs
  7. Bon chung

C) Nam gtsang skor [sko] pa
D) Stag chung dar
E) Dkar tshogs pa
F) Grong stod pa
G) Btsun rgyal pa
H) Mdo khams pa

The first clan (A), which is sub-divided into a further five clans, is that of the Bon po and has been discussed extensively in chapter three and readers should see that chapter for further details.

Like clan (A) Some of the other clans in this group are also interesting. The final group (H) provides a hint to the original point of migration i.e. eastern Tibet. Mdo khams can refer to Khams and A mdo, both eastern Tibetan provinces and both with links to Mi nyag. The eastern areas of these provinces made up the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, with parts of eastern A mdo making up the Tangut kingdom, of which Mi nyag was a component part. There is also a Mi nyag in Khams, which has been proposed by Balikci (2002) as the point from where the Tibetan departed for Sikkim. Though there is no direct evidence linking Tibetans with Mi nyag in Khams (with the exception of the later origin narratives), it seems that at least the Mdo khams pa did originate in eastern Tibet (if we assume that the name pre-dated the origin narrative and was not invented to fit within the scheme of that tradition). The other clan names are slightly more confusing. Group B can be translated as *The descendants of the old tiger*, which seems more like an epithet than a clan name. Group C could well be a misspelling for Nang tshang or household. In group D we find the use of Stag again and of the term *dar*, noted above. Stag is also the name of a Tibetan clan and it may be possible that Stag chung dar (D) and Rgan stag bu tshogs (B) may refer to this clan. Groups E, F and G, on the other hand, are quite confusing and open to a number of different readings. Group F probably refers to a place of origin, though where this place is, is open to speculation. The problem of identifying these clans is further compounded by the numerous spelling variations and the fact that they have been largely preserved in the oral traditions and origin narratives, which designate them as the original groups of migration.

Whilst these clans are considered to be the pure descendants of Gyad 'bum sags or his followers, they rarely held high social positions in the Sikkimese administration. The only families from the *Stong sde rus bzhi babs mtshan brgyad* are the La sogs family, from the Guru Bkra shis clan, and Brag dkar pa, who were originally from the Bon po nag ldig [sdig] clan. The Brag dkar pas trace their lineage to Bsod nams dpal sbyor, who according to *BGR* was Phyag mdzod during the reign of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, though we have no evidence supporting this. The first record we have for this family was during the

war of succession when Karma dar rgyas contributed to the defeat of the Bhutanese by beheading the General of the Bhutanese army, for which he was rewarded with land and was promoted to Phyag mdzod. At some point a son from this family was taken as a *mag pa* by the Brag dkar pa family of Tibet, and at a later point a *mag pa* was taken by the Sikkimese Brag dkar pa from the same Tibetan family.

It is interesting that only two of the leading families in Sikkim actually derive from the *Stong sde rus bzhi babs mtshan brgyad* (excluding the royal family) and this causes much speculation as to why this was the case. My own thought on this subject has resulted in the identification of four possible reasons for this situation. Firstly, during the foundation of the Sikkimese kingdom, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal may have judged it more useful to have regional leaders from the different ethnic communities of Sikkim. This may have arisen after the signing of *LMT* and the previous internal rebellion/war as a means of balancing the competing ambitions of the different proto-states he assimilated into his kingdom. Furthermore, with an ethnically balanced elite his rule could not been interpreted as a foreign occupation of Sikkim, or as the establishment of a Tibeto-Sikkimese hierarchy over a population of Limbu and Lepcha groups. By integrating the different ethnic communities at the highest level of government, it would appear to many people, as if he ruled by consensus and thus his legitimacy and prestige would have increased in the minds of his subjects.

The second reason may have its origins in later Sikkimese history. It may be a possibility that during the war of succession certain leading families from the *Stong sde rus bzhi babs mtshan brgyad* (if there were many) may have sided with the Bhutanese (which is alluded to in *JPKB*). Following the defeat of the Bhutanese it is highly likely that Phyag rdor rnam rgyal would have stripped those who supported the Bhutanese of their land and titles. A similar process could have taken place following the Nepali invasion in the late eighteenth century.

The third hypothesis results from the expansion of Sikkim, following the defeat of the Bhutanese and the later movements of the Sikkimese capital. When the kingdom took possession of territory in eastern Sikkim for the first time (after the Bhutanese invasion) the Chos rgyal may have chosen to promote local leaders in these new territories to the rank of *bka' blon* or *rdzong dpon*, or promote loyal supporters from western Sikkim but not of the *blon* or *rdzong dpon* class. The final reason for the lack of *blon* or *rdzong dpon* from the *Stong sde rus*

bzhi babs mtshan brgyad is the role of the British in reconstructing the nobility of Sikkim. It has been well recorded that they gave land grants to British supporters and actively encouraged and promoted nobles with a pro-British attitude.

Additional Tibeto-Sikkimese Clans

In addition to the *Stong sde rus bzhi babs mtshan brgyad* there are a number of other clans in Sikkim, some of which (like the Ha pa) are easier to identify than others. For example in Pho gdong in north Sikkim there are eight major clans: *A bsam pa, Ha pa, khang gsar pa* (technically this is not a Tibeto-Sikkimese clan but a Lepcha one), *Chu 'bir pa, 'bar mthing* (probably a Lepcha clan), *rdo shi pa* [sic], *Ang dgon* [sic], *rdzong ri pa*. Excluding the *khang gsar pa*, the first four clans refer to places either in Bhutan, the Chumbi valley or the southern Sikkim-Bhutan border (*A bsam pa*). The following three clans remain a mystery, yet the final clan seems an anomaly as it refers to a place in west Sikkim. According to my informants in Pho gdong, they claim that during the seventeenth century these clans fled Bhutanese expansion and took up residence in La chen and La chung in northern Sikkim, from where they migrated to Pho gdong in the eighteenth century. In *BGR* and *GoS* there are a number of other clans mentioned, who are considered of Tibetan origin but not part of the first migration:

1. Bu tshog po pa
2. Lag lding pa
3. Rgod rong pa
4. Gyeng pa
5. Stod pa
6. Shar pa
7. 'Bar phung bu tshogs pa (actually a Lepcha clan)
8. A ldan bu tshogs pa (Lepcha clan)[1]

Then there is a group of clans, which are considered to have migrated to Sikkim from Chumbi:

[1] *Gos*: 29.

1. Lha ma dar
2. Dge bsnyan pa
3. Ang dgon (noted above)
4. A thobs bu tshogs (Lepcha clan)
5. Rdog zhod pa
6. Khyim 'bar pa[2]

Then there are another group of clans, whose origins are (generally) unknown:

1. Mang spod pa
2. Na mang
3. Shag tshang pa (perhaps the descendants of monks?)
4. Rdo 'ob pa (people of the rocky ditch)
5. Sgang rgyab[3] pa (people behind the hill)
6. La 'og pa (people from below the pass)
7. Mang tshang pa (many families?)
8. Spa thing[4] pa (The people from Spa thing)
9. Beng ri pa (the people of Beng ri)
10. Ka gye pa (?)

From this brief overview of the Tibeto-Sikkimese clans, it is clear that further research needs to be conducted on this subject. At present no systematic survey of the clan networks in Sikkim has been completed, which is deeply problematic for understanding both the origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese and social organisation prior to the establishment of the Sikkimese state. I have suggested that it may be conceivable to imagine the early Sikkimese proto-states (chapters two and five) as regional groupings united through clan affiliation and inter-clan alliance. Of course, without further study of the Sikkimese clans, this shall remain pure speculation.

[2] Ibid.
[3] This is also a place in western Sikkim.
[4] A Sikkimese place name.

APPENDIX THREE

POPULATION AND CONFLICT IN EARLY SIKKIM

One thing that needs to be remembered when discussing early Sikkim is its comparatively small population. Today the current population of Tibeto-Sikkimese and Lepcha account for 20.9% of the Sikkimese population or 121,309 individuals.[1] The Limbu people account for 9.7% of the population or 56,650 individuals. It is difficult to determine the accuracy of these figures given that the all-Sikkim figures for Tibeto-Sikkimese (Bhutia), Lepcha and Limbu do not add up to the combined figures of the different districts. The total population of these three communities is given as 177,959, yet the figures by district (North: 28210, South: 31985, East: 63800, West: 46823) when totalled gives a combined figure of 170818, given a discrepancy in the figures of 4.01% or 7141 individuals. In addition to these discrepancies modern Indian census information, unlike the Sikkim state figures from 2006, is collected on the basis of language spoken and not ethnicity.

The earliest population figures available are those collected by the British in 1891, which gives the entire population as 30,458 including Nepali immigrants, and incredibly small figures for the Lepcha (5,762), Bhutia [sic] (Tibeto-Sikkimese 4,894) and Limbu (3,356) equating to 19%, 16% and 11% of the population respectively or a combined population of 14,012 (*GoS*: 27). In recent years these figures have been widely discredited as they fail to take account of Tibeto-Sikkimese, Lepcha and Limbu populations' resident outside of Sikkim and there is doubt over the methods used to collect the data for this census. Furthermore, if we accept that the Tibeto-Sikkimese had been living in Sikkim from, at least, the thirteenth century onwards and the Lepcha and Limbus had been living in Sikkim even longer than that, a glance at the above statistics for 1891 seems to imply a stagnant population growth rate lasting well over six hundred years followed

[1] The statistics in this section, unless otherwise stated, come from *The State Socio-Economic Census*, compiled by the Department of Economics, Statistics Monitoring and Evaluation, Government of Sikkim, 2006: 59. Thanks to my wife Cecilie Wathne, who (as an economist) provided the statistical skills, such as regression analysis, needed in this section.

by a rapid growth in the population. Something which is incredibly unlikely given that according to modern statistics (when compared to those of 1891) it appears then that the population of Tibeto-Sikkimese, Lepcha and Limbu groups have multiplied by 1170% or an annual population growth rate of 10.17%.[2] If we assume that this annual rate of 10.17% has remained constant prior to the census of 1891 (i.e. that for every year prior to 1891 the population decreased by 10.17%) then the population would have decreased in the following way:

Date	Population
1891	14012
1890	12587
1889	11307
1888	10157
1887	9124
1886	8196
1885	7363
1884	6614
1883	5941
1882	5337
1881	4794
1880	4307
1879	3869
1878	3475
1877	3122
1876	2804
1875	2519
1874	2263
1873	2033
1872	1826
1871	1640
1870	1473
1869	1324
1868	1189
1867	1068
1866	959

[2] The working of these percentages is based on the following equation used to determine population changes (x–y÷y*100 = % growth rate change in given period). In the example above x stands for the figures in the 2006 census and y stands for the figures of the 1891 census. To work out the basic average annual rate of change, the % growth rate change (in our example 1170%) is divided by the number of years between the two data points (in our case 115 years).

Table (*cont.*)

Date	Population
1865	862
1864	774
1863	696
1862	625
1861	561
1860	504
1859	453
1858	407
1857	365
1856	328
1855	295
1854	265
1853	238
1852	214
1851	192
1850	172
1849	155
1848	139
1847	125
1846	112
1845	101
1844	91
1843	81
1842	73
1841	66

This means that fifty years prior to 1891 the combined population of Tibeto-Sikkimese, Lepcha and Limbu would have been a paltry 66 individuals. Obviously there is either a problem in the population figures of 1891 or the population growth rate was much lower than the rate of the period 1891–2006. It may be plausible to assume that the population growth rate has increased since 1891 on account of better access to healthcare (particularly for pregnant women), decreased infant mortality rates, higher nutritional value of food and radical advances in medical science, particularly vaccinations. Certainly population growth rates have varied over time and the growth rate in 2000 was 16.2% (birth rate minus death rate), compared to 13.3% in 1997 and 15.8% in 1999.[3] Those statistics, however, are misleading as the

[3] *Sikkim: A statistical profile*, Government of Sikkim 2002: 61.

average annual all-Sikkim (all ethnic groups) population growth rate (calculated in the same way as the annual growth rate for the period 1891–2006) in the years 1991–2006 was actually 2.87%. This could mean a number of things. Firstly a high infant mortality rate; secondly, a process of migration out of Sikkim; thirdly and probably most likely the data gatherers (at the times the censuses were carried out) did not count in their population figures the large migrant population from other areas of India, though the births and deaths of this group was counted annually by healthcare workers. It seems that census data in Sikkim (like Mark Turin pointed out for Nepal in his article of 2000) is unreliable.

Given the unreliability of census data in Sikkim it is particularly difficult to run regressions based on the data available to retro-actively calculate the Sikkimese population in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Similarly there are a number of problems with using statistical methodology to estimate the population of Sikkim during the seventeenth century, even if the original data were reliable, as birth/death or population growth rates do not remain the same over time but fluctuate according to climatic conditions, natural disasters, epidemics, agricultural yields, war or a host of other variables. As such the following tables assume two things. Firstly, they assume that the population data from the 2006 Socio-economic census are close approximations of the actual population of Lepcha, Limbu and Tibeto-Sikkimese (Bhutia) in Sikkim during 2006 (with a margin of error of plus/minus 4.01%). The second assumption is that the annual percentage population growth rate mirrors the annual growth rates of the world population between the years 1600–2004.[4] This is quite a large assumption as not only are there significant continental differences in population growth there are also differences between say the population growth of Tibet (where population hardly grew at all) and the population growth of India or China, where population grew rapidly. However, given the lack of reliable statistics for Sikkim (as well as Tibet) it makes most sense to rely on average annual percentage increases in the world population as base figures as they reflect changing growth patterns, which as can been seen by the changes in population between 1891

[4] The figures are taken from the United Nations department for Economic and Social affairs 2004 report *World population until 2300* and population estimates from the United States census Bureau as found on: http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/worldhis.html.

and 2006 are replicated, to a certain extent, in Sikkim. Thus the hypothetical population figures for the seventeenth century presented in the table below assume the following growth rates; 1600–1800: 0.25%; 1800–1920: 0.75%; 1920–1950; 1.05%; 1950–2006: 2.7%.

Table showing estimated population of Sikkim based on World annual average population growth rates

Year	Population	annual growth rate
2006	177959	2.70%
1950	40029	2.70%
1920	29261	1.05%
1800	11937	0.75%
1700	92299	0.25%
1690	9070	0.25%
1680	8846	0.25%
1670	8628	0.25%
1660	8416	0.25%
1650	8208	0.25%
1640	8006	0.25%
1630	7808	0.25%
1620	7616	0.25%
1610	7428	0.25%
1600	7245	0.25%

The table above shows that in 1650 the population of Sikkim (Tibeto-Sikkimese, Lepcha and Limbu) was 8208 individuals. In all probability the population was probably higher as the marriage customs, particularly of the Tibeto-Sikkimese, would have led to a stable population with stagnant, negligible or incredibly small growth between the years 1600–1920. In addition the figures above do not take into consideration population migration, in particular the well recorded migration from Sikkim to the Darjeeling hills following the cession of Darjeeling to the British in 1835. They also exclude the large Lepcha population now resident in Darjeeling district and exclude the migration to Sikkim of Limbus in the early twentieth century, particularly during the rule of Sir Bkra shis rnam rgyal. However, even if one were to project the 1920 population figure calculated above the population of seventeenth century Sikkim (whatever the actual figure may have been) would still have been relatively small.

The size of the population in early Sikkim has a bearing on a number of issues; namely the ability to conduct warfare and the size and

scope of a monastic population. According to *MTB* the size of a household ranged from five to ten members and in the regions covered by that register enumerates approximately 1,378 individuals. Using *MTB* as a guide, households probably included on average 8 members and settlements comprised of approximately 10–15 households. The area of Yog bsam under Ma chen Byams pa, we are told, consisted of 97 individuals. However, this was not the entire population of Yog bsam as the *las byed mon pa* are also from the Yog bsam valley (see chapter three for a definition of this group) and according to *MTB* that population included 62 individuals making the population of Yog bsam 159 individuals or approximately sixteen households. There is no way of knowing whether this was the entire population of Yog bsam, or just those areas that paid taxes, or whether *MTB* has been preserved in its entirety. My own suspicions rest on the abrupt ending of *MTB*, which to me indicates that it was a much larger and more comprehensive document, however, even if that is true it is hard to imagine a population, based on the both the population estimates noted above (i.e. 8,208 or 29,261), of Yog bsam exceeding 400 people.

If, for the sake of argument, we accept a population of Yog bsam of around 400 (which is still very small) we can calculate that there would have only been around 40–50 households (using the average household size as recorded in *MTB*). This makes Yog bsam a larger than average settlement: Bkra shis 'dzoms has around 15 households today,[5] Bkra shis sdings (around the monastery) may have come close to equalling Yog bsam's population with 40–50 households and La sogs may have had as few as 20 households. Excluding the smaller settlements, some of which have subsequently died out or become part of these other areas, the population of these four settlements would have been roughly 1000 or 120 households. There are, of course other regions of Sikkim: Padma gling approximately 10–20 households, Sing dram 5–10 households, Rgyal zhing 20–30 households, Chum bong (a large settlement), Zil gnon 10–15 households etc.

[5] This figure has decreased over the years as a result of urbanisation. However around twenty households claim descent from the time of Lha dbang bkra shis, which if true indicates that during the seventeenth century there were around twenty households in Bkra shis 'dzoms and around a further 15–25 households in the wider region (including the slopes of Dpa' bo hung ri, and along the old Yog bsam road. Mtsho gnyis (approximately a two hour walk from Bkra shis 'dzoms) was said to have five households and was considered small.

Given this small population any 'conquest' of Sikkim in the 17th century would probably appear to historians, more familiar with European wars of the same period, as little more than a minor scuffle with a somewhat inevitable outcome. Projections in the population size of 17th century Sikkim is fraught with danger; given that no complete statistical data survives from that period. I have been using a figure of around 10,000 people in my estimates meaning that most settlements' population sizes would range between 50–400 individuals, with an average of around 150. This in turn would mean that any army raised from the small chiefdoms of early Sikkim (which may range from 5–10 such settlements or a total population of 750–1500 individuals) would not have been able to exceed a maximum force of 300–750 fit men of fighting age (17–40). In addition, a force of that number could only have been raised during the winter months of November-February, when there is little agricultural work. Raising an army during any other time would have had a serious impact on the local economy and subsequent agricultural yields.[6] The small population and agricultural requirements precludes the existence of a professional standing army.

With our estimate of the entire population of Yog bsam valley at 400 people a force with the desire to capture and control the area would not need to be large. The primary military focus for an attack on Yog bsam would be the Lepcha palace/settlement of Bkra shis steng kha, which having viewed the site would have been unable to support a population above 5–10 households (*MTB* gives the population as 62 individuals). Thus an army of 100 reasonably trained men could easily have overrun the settlement complex, whilst another force, approaching from the ridges of Dpa' bo Hūṃ ri could have occupied the surrounding hills of Sgrub sde, the upper Ra thong chu valley and the sporadic settlements located around Yog bsam.

If such battles would have required such small numbers why was the growth and expansion of Sikkim stunted? Why was the unification of Sikkim such a late development? Perhaps the expansion of Sikkim

[6] The small population of Sikkim also contributed to the failure of celibate monasticism. Sikkim simply did not have the surplus population to maintain celibate monasteries, with all able men required to perform agricultural duties. For this reason there was never a significant permanent presence in Sikkim's monasteries, with the majority of monks only attending the monastery during rituals. For this reason monasteries in Sikkim never grew to the size of monasteries in other areas of the Tibetan world.

occurred much earlier or there existed a political stalemate between rival political entities none of which were strong enough to tip the balance of power. Another reason may have been the population itself as well as the mountainous topography; with such a small population raising an army or defensive/attacking force would have been extremely difficult, with large parts of the working population engaged most of the year in agriculture. Further, settlements may have been spread over large distances (in terms of time not physical distances)[7] making it difficult to organize and recruit an affective force. In short the small population probably provided a natural balance of power, as the recruitment of guards or armies could not have occurred without a disruption of agricultural practices. Thus the balance of power in the region would have been seriously altered after the alliance between Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, Lha dbang bkra shis and bstan 'dzin developed. Prior to this alliance Phun tshogs rnam rgyal had approximately 85 households under his power and could have raised a small army, during winter, of around 200–250 men.[8] Lha dbang bkra shis and bstan 'dzin's base had around 20 households and if they controlled the slopes of Dpa' bo hūṃ ri and the old Yog bsam road could have had as many as 45 households, giving them a force 100–150 men. This combined force of 300–400 men would have been equal to the entire population of Yog bsam (if we accept the estimate of 400 people for the population of Yog bsam) and would have been enough to overrun the Yog bsam valley.

[7] James Scott has noted that rugged landscapes have an impact on the ability of a state to impose itself on the population as compared to flat landscapes where the reach of a state would be longer (2009: 47–50). He also factors the economic cost of the state particularly the transportation of grain, which would have fuelled pre-modern states in the form of taxation. He argues that there is a natural distance that a state can control after that distance is reached the value of the grain transported is negated by the grain/fodder needed to feed the animals or people transporting the grain (2009: 44) and that this physical distance is reduced when the terrain is hilly or mountainous.

[8] Figures are estimates and range from 20–25% of the total population as of the total population 50% would be women and I have estimated that a further 25% would be the elderly, the infirm or children.

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Cover Page[1]

༄༅། ལ་སོགས་དུ་འབྲིལ་བའི་རྒྱལ་རབ[2]

(1)

༄༅།། མི་ཉག་ཨའོ་སྟོང་གི་བྱང་ཁྲུང་རྒྱུད་བ་ནས་འདིར Lacuna ་ཚུལ་མོན་པའི་མཐོ་བྱང[3]-ཟིན་བྲིས་སུ་བཀོད་པའོ།

(2)

༄༅། །ན་མོ་བཛྲ་གུ་རུ་རཏྣ་ཡེ། བསྐལ་པ་རྒྱ་མཚོར་ཚོགས་གཉིས་ཡོངས་རྫོགས་བྱང་ཆུབ་མཆོག་ཏུ། ཐུགས་ཀྱི་དགོངས་པ་ལེགས་བསྐྱེད་ནས། འཛམ་གླིང་བསྐྱེད་གུའི[4] འགྲོ་རྣམས་འདྲེན་ཕྱིར་དགའ་ལྡན་ལྷ་ཡི་ཕྲོང་[5] ཁྲི་ལས་རབ་བཞེངས་ཏེ། གཟིགས་པས་འཁོར་ལོས་བསྒྱུར་རྒྱལ་ཟས་གཙང་སྲས་སུ་འཁྲུངས་མི་ལོ་བཅུ་གཉིས་བསམ་གཏན་མཉམ་པར་བཞག། རྫོགས[6] སངས་རྒྱས་ནས་བདུད་དང་མུ་སྟེགས་རབ་བཏུལ་ཆོས་ཕུང་བརྒྱད་ཁྲི་བཞི་སྟོང་ལ་སོགས་པ། གསུང་དབྱངས་ཡན་ལག་དྲུག་ཅུའི་ཆོས་འཁོར་བསྐོར་ཞིང་རྒྱལ་བསྟན་ཀུན་གྱི་གཙུག་གི་ནོར་བུ་མཆོག ཨོ་རྒྱན་འབྱུང་གནས་ཐུབ་དབང་ཆེན་པོ་ས་གསུམ་འགྲོ་བའི་ །མིག་གཅིག་དམ་པ་དེ་ལ་འདུད། གང་གི་དགོངས་གསང་ཟེར་ལྡ་འཕྲུག་པའི་ཀློང་། དབྱིངས་རིག་རྡོ་རྗེའི་མཁའ་གསང་ལས་འཕྲོས་པའི། མཚོ་སྐྱེས་རྡོ་རྗེའི་རང་བྱུང་སྤྲུལ་པའི་སྐུ། སྦུས[7]

(3)

ཡུལ་བསྟན་འགྲོའི་སྒྲོག་ཤིང་དེ་ལ་འདུད། དམར་སེར་ལི་ཁྲིའི་མདངས་ལྡན་གླེག[8] རལ་འཛིན། མཐོན་མཐིང་རལ་པའི་ཐོར་གཙུག་རྩེ་བྲན་ཅན། སྣ་ཚོགས་བརྒྱན་མཛེས་གསུང་དབྱངས་ཆོས་སྒྲ་ཡིས། འདྲེན་མཛད་འཛམ་མགོན་ལྷ་ཡིས་གཤིས་པ་སྐྱོལ། བདེ་ལྡན་

[1] The text contains many spelling errors which I have attempted to correct. Any remaining errors are an oversight on my part.
[2] Recte. *rabs*
[3] Recte. *tho byang*
[4] Recte. *dgu.*
[5] *sdus yig* for *pho brang*
[6] Recte. *rdzogs pa'i*
[7] Recte. *sbas*
[8] Recte. *glegs.*

ཞིང་ན་ཆོས་སྐུ་འོད་དཔག་མེད། རི་བོ་[9] ཏ་ལར་འཕགས་མཆོག་གན་རས་གཟིགས། ལྕང་ལོ་ཅན་དུ་གསང་བདག་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཛིན། །རྣམ་གསུམ་གཡེལ་མེད་ཆེན་པོར་བདག་འདུད་དོ། རྒྱལ་བ་ཀུན་ངོ་བོ་ཀུ་གསུམ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་། བགྲིན་གསུམ་[10] ལྡན་རྩ་བའི་བླ་མ་མཆོག གསང་ཆེན་བསྟན་པའི་སྙིང་མོ་འོད་པོ་ཆེ། བདག་གི་སྤྱི་བོའི་ཚོར་བསྐྱན་བཞུགས་གསོལ། ༤བཅན་བསྲུང་[11] དམ་ཅན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཚོགས་སྤྱི་དང་།

(4)

ཁྲིད་པར་གངས་ཆེན་མཛོད་ལྔ་ལ་སོགས་པ། ཕུ་བར་མདའ་ཡི་གནས་བསྲུངས་[12] གཞི་བདག་པོ།[13] ནོར་ལྷ་གཏེར་བདག་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཤིས་པར་མཛོད། ཞེས་མཆོད་པར་བརྗོད་པས་ལམ་[14] ཡངས་པར་བྱས་ཏེ། མཐའ་ཁོབ་མོན་གྱི་ཡུལ་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་མཐིལ་དུ་མི་ཉག་ཨ་བོ་སྟོང་གི་བརྒྱུད་ལས་མཐོན་པའི་རིགས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པ་རིམ་གྱི་ཆགས་ཚུལ་འདི་ལྟར་རོ། ;དེ་ཡང་སྦས་ཡུལ་ཀུན་གྱི་གཙོ་འབྲས་མོ་ལྗོངས་འདི། མཁན་སློབ་ཆོས་གསུམ་རྫུ་འཕྲུལ་[15] ཞབས་བཅགས་ཏེ། བྲག་དཀར་བཀྲིས་ལྡིང་ཁྲིའི་དབུས་ཉིད་ནས། རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གནས་ལུགས་མ་ལུས་སྟེན་ལ་བབས།[16] སྦྱལ་པའི་རྣལ་བྱོར་ཆེད་བཞིའི་[17] ལུང་ཏུ་གཏན།[18] །ཡུལ་འདིར་ཆོས་སྲིད་རྒྱལ་སྲིད་གཉིས་སྐྱོང་བའི། ལས་ལྡན་མི་རིགས་རྣ་ཚོགས་ཡོང་[19] གསུང་བའི། སྟོང་ལྷ་རྟ་ས་ཏེ་ཞེས་སྟེང་ཕྱོགས་ལྷ་ཆད་ཏེ།ནང་མཚན་[20] རྒྱ་དཀར་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་རྒྱལ་ཕྲན་གྱི། རྒྱུད་ལས་འོངས་ཏེ་ཁམས་ཕྱོགས་མི་ཉག་རིགས། ཨའོ་སྟོང་གི་བརྒྱུད་དུ་འབྱོར་པ་ཡིས། སྤྱན་

(5)

༄༅། ཚན་ནང་ནས་ལས་འབྲེལ་སྨོན་མཐུས། ཁམས་ནས་ཡར་མཐོན་ལྷ་ལྡན་དབུས་འབྱོར་ཆེ། གནས་རྣམས་མཇལ་ཞིང་རིམ་གྱིས་ལམ་བཤག བྲ་མ་ལུང་སླེབ་སྟེ་རེ་ཞིག་ངལ་བསོ་བརྟེན། ཡར་འབྲོག་སྣང་བརྒྱུད་འོང་ཏེ་རྒྱལ་རྩེར་འབྱོར། དེ་ནས་རིམ་བཞིན་དུས་ན་ལམ་བརྒྱུད་ཕག་རིར་སླེབས། ཁམ་བུར་ཞབས་དྲུང་ལྷ་རིགས་མཆོད་ཡོན་མཇལ། གསོན་དབང་གཤི་ཆོག་རིགས་རྣམས་[21] རིམ་གྱིས་སྐྱངས།[22] གནས་ཀྱི་ཕྱི་སློ་གྲོ་མ་ཁང་ཆུང་ནས་། ཆུ་མོ་གཡོང་དང་ཆུ་འབེར་རིམ་ཆགས་སོ། ཆུ་འབེར་རེ་

[9] Recte. *po.*
[10] Recte. *drin gsum*
[11] Recte. *srung.*
[12] Recte. *srung.*
[13] Recte *sogs*
[14] Recte. *brjod pa'i lam.*
[15] Recte. *rdzu 'phrul.*
[16] Recte. *gtan la phab.*
[17] Recte. *rnal 'byor mched bzhi'i.*
[18] Recte. *bstan*
[19] Recte. *sna tshogs 'ongs.*
[20] Recte. *nang tshan.*
[21] I am not entirely certain as to what *gson dbang shi chog rigs* refers; the most likely rendering is 'the caste of those who perform death rituals'.
[22] Recte. *bskyangs.*

ཞིག་སྟོད་སྣེ་སྲིད་མ་འཕེལ། །དེ་ནས་མོན་ཡུལ་སེང་ལྡིང་བྱ་བ་ན། །མོན་པ་ཧྲིག་ངོལ་བཟའ་ཚངས[23]་ཡོད་པ་ཡིས། སྲིད་ཀྱི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་སྒྲིག་ཐབས[24]-ཤེས་ཟེར་ཐོས། ཀུན་གྱི་སྤྱི་མིས་གྲུད་པ་འབུམ་བསགས་ཀྱི། འཚམས་འོངས་མོན་ཡུལ་སློབས་ཕྲལ[25]་མོན་དང་འཕྲད། མོན་པས་དོན་བྱེད་ཅི་ཡིན་དྲི་བ་བྱས། གྲུད་པས་མོན་པའི

(6)

གཏམ་ལན་བཏབ་པ་ནི། སེང་ལྡིང་ཡུལ་དུ་ཧྲིག་ངོལ་བྱ་བ་ཡོད། དེའི་གསར[26]་འགྲོ་རྒྱུ་གར་ཡོད་ཤེས་བསམ་དྲིས། མོན་པ[27]་དེ་ནི་ཤེས་སོ་ཟེར་ནས་སོང་། གྲུད་པས་མོན་པའི་རྗེས་སུ་གཉག་སོང་པས།[28] ཁྲིམ་རྩར་འབྱོར་སྐབས་ཧྲིག་རང་ཡིན་པར་འདུག། ནང་དུ་ཐོས་ནས་འཆང[29]་བྱིན་གཏམ་དྲིས་བྱུང་། གྲུད་ཀྱི་ལན་བཏབ་བདག་ལ་སྲིད་མ་འཕེལ ་སྲིད་ཐབས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཤེས་ཟེར་བས། འོངས་པའི་དོན་ནི་དེ་ཡིན་སྲིད་འཕེལ་ཀྱི། བཅོས་ཐབས་གང་ཤེས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་བྱ་བར་རིགས།[30] གྲུད་པས་ལབ་པའི་མོན་གྱི་ལན་བཏབ་པ། བུ་པའི་བཅོས་ཐབས་ཤེས་ཟེར་ཁས་ལེན་བྱུང་། །གྲུད་ཀྱི་ཡར་ལོག་ཡུལ་སློབས་རེ་ཞིག་ནས། ཇོ་མོ་གུ་རུའི་ལུས་ལ་སྲིད་ཆགས་ཞིང་ དེ་ནས་གནས་ཡུལ་གཉག[31]་ནས་ཡུལ་མཐོན་ཏེ། འོངས་པའི་ལམ་བར་ལ་རྒྱབ་བྲག་ཕུག་ཏུ། བུ་བརྩས་ལ་བསོས[32]་འོང་པས་མོན་ཡུལ་སློབས། ཧྲིག་ལ་བུ་བཅོལ་གཏད་ཅིང་ལེགས་སོ་བྱས།

(7)

༄༅། ཧྲིག་གི་བུ་བསོས[33]-རིགས་བརྒྱུད་མང་བར་འཕེལ། ཟེར་ཞིང་ཁོས་ཀྱང་བཟའ་བཏུང་རྒྱས་པ་བྱེད། མིང་ཡང་བྲག་བཙན་དར་ལ་བཏགས་པའོ། གཉིས་ཀ་ལས་འབྲེལ་བཤུགས་ཀྱི་ལས་དབང་གི། གྲུད་པ་འབུམ་དང་ཧྲིག་གཉིས་གྲོགས་འབྲེལ་བྱུང་། ཕོ་རིགས་རྩམ་ལྟོང་ཅན་ཀུན་བུ་ཉེས་ཟེར། མོ་རིགས་གང་ཡིན་བུ་མོའི་ཉེ་བར་བཞག། གཉིས་ཀ་འདོད་ཐུན[34]་རོང་སྒོགས་ཡུལ་དུ་ཆགས། བུ་ཚ་རིགས་རྒྱུད་བར་དུ་འབྲལ་མེད་ཀྱི། གནའ[35]་ལན་གཡོམ་སྒྲིག་རྒྱ་མི་གསོན་ལ་བསད།[36] ནོར་ལུག་རི་དྭགས་མང་བསད་ལྤགས་གདན་གཏིང་།[37] རྒྱ་མའི་ཟར་མ[38]་རྐང་པ་ཁྲག་གཞོང་བཞག། །བྲག་བཙན་དར་གྱི་ཕ་མེས

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[23] Recte. *Bza' tshang*
[24] Recte. *'grig thabs*
[25] Recte. *'phral.*
[26] Recte. *sar*
[27] Recte: *mon pas*
[28] Recte. *rjes su bsnyags song pas.*
[29] Recte. *chang*
[30] In *PSLG* this passage reads *bcos thabs gang shes khyed kyi bya bar dris.*
[31] Recte. *snyeg.*
[32] Recte. *gsos*
[33] Recte. *gsos*
[34] Recte. *mthun*
[35] Recte. *Mna'*
[36] This should probably read something like *rgya ri (dwags) gsol la bsad.*
[37] Recte. *bting.*
[38] Recte *Za ma*

རིགས་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི། ཕོ་ལྷ་དགྲ་ལྷ་འགོ་བའི་ལྷ་ལྔ་དང་། གནས་བསྲུང་ཡུལ་ལྷ་གཞི་བདག་དཔང་དུ་བཙུག ཏྲིག་གི་མོན་ལྷ་གང་ ཡིན་དཔང་དུ་བཙུག་ནས ཡང་མོན་གཉིས་ཁ་འབྲེལ་བའི་མནའ་ཆེན་བརྒྱབ་བ། བྲག་བཙན་དར་གྱི་རིམ་གྱིས་ཡུལ་རྩལ་བ།

(8)

ཏྲིག་གིས་རིགས་སུ་ཉེ་བ་དགའ་ཞིག་བཏང་། སྣང་ཏོག་ཐེལ་ནོན་རྩེ་ལ་ཡུལ་ཆགས་སོ། ༈སློབ་དཔོན་ཆེན་པོ་པདྨའི་ལུང་དོན་ལ། མི་ཉག་ཨ་བོ་གདུང་གི་རིགས་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱིས། གནས་ཡུལ་ས་འདི་སྐྱོང་བའི་ལུང་གཏན[39] བཞིན། སྔོན་ལམ་དུས་བབ་མངའ་ཐང་ རྗེ་མཐོར་སོང་། དེ་ནས་ཏྲིག་གི་ཉེ་རིང་གང་ཡིན་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་ཐབས་ཀྱིས་མཐའ་དག་འཁོར་དུ་བསྡུས། ཐོག་མར་མོན་པའི་ནང་ ནས་གློ་འཁེལ་བའི། ནང་བཟན་བུ་དང་ཁྲུད་མེད་བསམ་འབར་བྱུང་། དེ་ནས་རིམ་བཞིན་མཁའ་གཏད་བྱུང་རིགས་རྣམས། གློ་ཁེལ་ ནང་གཡོག་ལ་སོགས་གལ་ཆེ་བའི། མགོ་ཆིངས་ལས་དཔོན་སོ་སོར་བཀོད་ནས་བཞག། དེ་རྗེས་བཀྲིས་སྟེང་ཁའི་མོན་རིགས་བྱུང་། སེང་ལྡིང་མོན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་རིམ་གྱིས་བསྡུས།[40] ཚང་མ་ལས་བྱེད་མོན་པ་མིང་བཏགས་སོ། དེ་ལྟར་བཀའ་བླ[41]་མ་བདེ་གློ་མ་ ཁེལ། གང་ཡིན་མཐའ་དག་ཚོང་སྐྱེས[42]་མོན་པ་ཞེས། ཕྱི་གཡོག་དོས་སྐྱེལ་རྐང་འགྲོ་དགོས་རིགས་དང་། ལག་འདོན་

(9)

༄༅། བཟོ་ལུམ་དབྱར་མཛལ་དགུན་ཐོག་སར།[43] ཆད་མེད་སྒྲུབ་པའི་ཚོང་ཁྲལ་བཀོད་ནས་བཞག། དེ་ནས་གནས་ཀྱི་མཐིལ་དུ་ ཆགས་རྩལ་ནི། ༈སྤྲུལ་པའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་མཆེད་བཞི་ལུང་བསྟན་བཞིན། ༈ཆུ་རྟ་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་བྱོན། རྒྱལ་ཁྲིམས་ མངའ་གསོལ་དགའ་སྟོན་བརྒྱ་ཆེན་མཛད། གནས་འདི་ལུགས་གཉིས་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་ཐ་ཆེན་སྒྲོགས། བསྟན་སྲིད་སྡེ་ཚུགས[44]་ཀུན་གྱི་ རྗེ་བོར་བཀོད། དེ་ནས་བཀྲིན་ཆེ་བ་ཕ་མས་ནི། ༈ལྷ་དབང་བསྟན་འཛིན་ལྷ་དབང་བཀྲིས་སོགས། སྣང་ཏོག་ཐེལ་ནོན་རྩེ་ནས་ ཡུལ་འདེགས་ཏེ། གནས་ཀྱི་མཐིལ་དུ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་མ་སྒྲིག་ཞིང་། ཐོག་མར་མོན་ཕུ་བཀྲིས་འཇོམས་དུ་ཆགས།[45] ཡུལ་བཟུང་གཞིས་ བཅའ་མོན་རིགས་དབང་དུ་བསྡུས། ལོ་འགའ་སྡོད་ནས་སྤས་ཡུལ་མཐིལ་དུ་སླེབས། ལ་སོགས་འབྱོར་ནས་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ཉིད་དང་ མཛལ། མཛལ་ཁ་ཞུས་པས་དགྱེས་པའི་སྣང་བ་སྩལ། ཁྲི་ལོས[46]་ནང་དུ་ལ་སོགས་རྫོང་རྒྱབ། ཆོས་རྒྱལ་བསྟན་བསྲུང[47]

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39 Recte. *bstan*
40 Should read *seng lding Mon pa rnams rim gyis bsdus.*
41 Recte. *Bka' blon*
42 Recte. *skyel.*
43 Recte. *Mtho gsar*.
44 Recte. *sde btsugs.*
45 Possibly *bcags*
46 Recte. *lo*
47 Recte. *Bstan srung.*

(10)

་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་འདི་ནང་འབྲུངས། གླང་ལོས[48] ནང་དུ་རབ་ལྡན་རྩེ་བཞེངས་ཡུག་མཐིང་ལྷ་དབང་བཀྲིས་ཁྲིད་བཞེངས་པ་ཡིན། ས་གཞི་བཟུང་ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གཉིས་པ་བསྒྲིག། རིམ་གྱིས་ཡོག་བསམ་མོན་པ་འགའ་ཞིག་དང་། ཚོང་སྐྱུལ་གཡོག་བཅས་སློན་ལམ་ཤུགས་གྱིས་འཛོམས། དེ་ལྟར་གནས་ཀྱི་ཕོ་ཉར་མངགས་བ་ཡིས། ཕུ་མདའ་བར་གྱི་མོན་པ་གང་ཡིན་རྣམས། །དཔོན་གཡོག་ཛི་སྲིད་བསྐལ་བརྒྱར་བྲལ་མེད་ཀྱིས། འདུན་མར་འཛོམས་ནས་མནའ་དང་དག་པས་ཅིངས།[49] རང་འོག་བདག་ཐོབ་ཕོ་ཁྲིར་མོ་ཁྲིར་སྟོན།[50] རང་གི་མོན་པ་ཕོ་ཡིན་ན། བུ་རྣམས་གང་ཡོད་རང་གི་ཐོབ། བུ་ཅིག་ཡིན་ན་ཕ་ཚབ་བཞག། རང་གི་མནགས་མོ་ཡིན་པ་ལ། བུ་མོ་གང་ཡིན་རང་གི་ཐོབ། བུ་མོ་ཅིག་རང་ཡིན་ན་མ་ཡི་ཚབ། མོན་ཕོར་བུ་མོ་ཅིག་པ་དང་། མནགས་མོར་བུ་མོ་ཅིག་ཡིན་ན། ་དེ་དག་གཞན་གྱི་ཐོབ་རིགས་ཡིན། དེ་ལྟར་མངོན་ནས་ཐག་ཆོད་དོ། དཔོན་གཡོག་རིགས་བརྒྱུད་ཆུ་མོའི་རྒྱུན་ལྟར་གནས། ལར་རྒྱུར་པན་

(11)

ཕྱིར་མ་དེབས[51] ་འདིར་གསལ་བྱ། དེ་ཡང་སྟོད་འབྲེལ་ལས་བོད་སྐད་དུ་སེར་འཕྱང་ཞེས་པ་མེ་བྱ་ལོ་དུས་འཁོར་བའི་སྟོན་འབྲིང་། འབྲུམ་སྟོད་ཉ་བ་བུ་མོའི་ཁྲིམ་ལ་སྤྱོད་པ། ཧོར་ཟླ་བ་བརྒྱད་པ གཟའ་སྐར་ཆོས་གྲངས་འཕྲོད་སྦྱོར་བཀྲིས་པའི་ཉི་མ་ལ་སོགས་བཀྲིས་དཔལ་འབྱོར་གཞིས་ཁར་བདག་མིང་ཀརྨ་ཚང་པའམ་སྐལ་བཟང་བློ་ལྡན་དུ་གྲགས་པས་མཐོ་སྒྲིགས་ཡང་དག་བྱས་པ་དགེ་ལེགས་སུ་གྱུར་ཅིག།

[48] Recte. *lo*
[49] Recte. *bcings*
[50] Recte. *Pho rgyud mo rgyud*
[51] Recte. *Ma deb*

APPENDIX FIVE

MNGA' BDAG RGYAL RABS

Stag Sham Can Section with Translation

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དེ་ལྟར་སའི་བདག་པོ་བཀྲིས་མགོན་གྱིས་བཙུན་མོ་མང་ཞིག་ཁབ་དུ་བཞེས་པ་ལ། མཆོག་དུ་གྱུར་པ་བུད་མེད་རིན་པོ་ཆེར་གྱུར་མཚོ་སྨན་རྒྱལ་མོ་ཞེས་པའི་བཙུན་མོ་ལ། ལྷུམས་སུ་བཞུགས་པར་མཛད་དེ། རྒྱལ་པོ་…ཞིར་གྱུར་པ། ངོ་མཚར་གྱིས་རྣམ་ཐར་དང་ལྡན་པ། རིན་ཆེན་ཆོས་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་རྣ་ལམ་དུ། གསེར་གྱི་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཏ་ཙང་ལྟི་བ་མ་ཡིན…

Accordingly the Lord Bkra shis mgon married many princesses, the jewel of the queens who was known as Mtsho sman rgyal mo. He caused her to become pregnant. There exist many marvellous stories regarding the birth of the [next] king. In the ocean dharma jewelled dream he emerged with an amazing light golden *vajra* in his hand, which was dropped in the queen's lap

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པ་ཞིག་ཕྱུག་དུ་བྱུང་བ། བཙུན་མོའི་ཕང་པར་སྐྱུར་བས། འོང་དུ་ཞུ་ནས་ཐིམ་པ་རྨིས་རིང་པོར་མི་ཐོགས་པ་སྲས་ཁྱད་པར་ཅན་ཞིག་འབྱུང་ངོ་གསུངས་པ་དང་། སྐབས་ཤིག་རྫོ་གི་ཅིག་ཕོ་བྲང་དུ་ཐལ་དུ་འོང་ནས། ཡུམ་སྦྲུམ་པ་ལ་འཛུག་མོ་གཏད་ནས།[1] འདི་ལ་བུ་ཞིག་སྐྱེ་དེ་ཡང་ཕ་ལ་ཕ་ལ་འབྱུང་ཞེས་སྨོས་དཀར་ཧོག་ཅིག་གཏད་པ་དང་། ཡུམ་གྱི་རྣ་ལམ་དུ་ཉི་ཟླ་སྐྱུ་ཤར་བ་སོགས་ངོ་མཚར་བའི་མཚན་མ་མང་ཞིང་དུས་བཟང་པ་ལ། རྒྱལ་ས་ཤེལ་དཀར་ཕོ་བྲང་དུ་སྐྱུ་སྟམས།[2] དེའི་མཚན་ཡང་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་བསོད་ནམས་མགོན་པོར་བཏགས་སོ། དེ་སྐྱུ་ན་བསོན་པ་དང་ལོ་དཀར་རྒྱལ་སྲིད་བདག་གིར་མཛད་། ལྷ་ཅིག་སྒྲོལ་མ་དཔལ་འཛོམས་ལ་སྲས་ཅིག་འཁྲུངས་པ། བཀྲིས་ཁྲི་བཙན་དུ་གྲགས།

…and not to long after the dream it was said that an amazing son will be born. At the time a *yogi* suddenly appeared in the palace and pointed a finger to the pregnant mother and said to the mother "She will bear a son and that son will be a father to a son, who will be a

[1] Recte: *mdzug mo*
[2] Recte: *ltams*

father to a son."[3] And gave [her] a single piece of white incense. In the mother's dreams there [appeared] many magnificent signs such as the rising of the sun and the moon and [so] at this wonderful time in the white crystal palace of the capital the baby was born. He was given the name Chos rgyal bsod nams mgon po.[4] When he reached the appropriate age he ruled the kingdom for some years. The Lady sgrol ma dpal 'dzoms gave birth to a son, who was called Bkra shis khri btsan.[5]

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ནམ་ཞིག་གི་དུས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་བཀའ་བསྣུང་གི་ཐུགས་རྒྱུད་བསྐུལ་ནས། རྒྱལ་སྲིད་ཙུང་པོ་འཇིག་རྟེན་དབང་ཕྱུག་ལ་གཏད་དེ་མངའ་གསོལ། རྒྱལ་སྲིད་སྤངས་ནས་ཆོས་ལ་བྱོན་པ་ལས། ཡབ་མཚན་མངའ་བདག་རྫོང་ཁ་བདག་པོ། ཁྲི་ཀུན་དགའ་ལྡེ་དང་ལྕམ་པདྨ་མཚོ་གཉིས་ཉེའི་འབྲུན་མཛད་དེ་ཟླ་བའི་བར་དུ་བཞུགས་པ་ལས། འཕགས་པ་ཝ་ཏི་མཇལ་བར་དགོངས་ནས། དཔོན་གཡོག་བརྒྱད་བྱ་བྲལ་བའི་ཆས་སུ་གཞུག་ནས་བྱོན་པ་ལས། དགོན་པ་རྣམ་གླིང་ཞེས་པར་རྗེ་བྱམས་པ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་དང་མཇལ་བས་བཙོས་མིན་གྱི་དད་པ་ཐུགས་ལ་འཁྲུངས་ནས། གཙང་ལུགས་ཀྱི་སྙན་བརྒྱུད་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིག lacuna ཁྲིད་དབང་གདམས་ངག་བཅས་བསན་ཞིང་རྟོགས་གྲོལ་དུས་གཉམ་དུ་གྱུར་ཏོ།[6] དེ་ནས་རྗེའི་བཀའ་བཞིན་ཡུལ་ཙུང་གི་གྲ་སྐར་ཞེས་པར་མཁན་བྱམས་

Then one day having been inspired by the *ḍākinī's* words he entrusted his son [Bkra shis khri btsan] with the rule of the kingdom, and renouncing political power he embraced the dharma. The father [took the new name of] Mnga' bdag rdzong kha bdag po. Both the lord Kun dga' lde and his wife Lady Padma mtsho acted as devotees and [they] resided for up to a month [with him] during which time, he contemplated a visit to the 'Phags pa wa ti.[7] And with eight masters and servants who had accepted the life of the renunciant, [he] departed. Then in the monastery known as Rnam gling[8] on account of meeting the

[3] This is a slightly puzzling passage.
[4] This is the man that would be known later as Mnga' bdag stag sham can.
[5] This is the son of Chos rgyal bsod nams mgon po.
[6] Recte: *nyams su gyur*
[7] This is one of the four noble brothers (*'phags pa mched bzhi*) and is a statue made from a sandal wood tree which was broken into four pieces during the seventh century (in Nepal); one of the four statues of Avalokiteśvara is housed in a monastery in Dharamsala, another is located in Lhasa and the remaining two are in Nepal (Ehrhard 2004).
[8] Located in modern Zhigatse prefecture.

master Byams pa phun tshogs[9] (1503–1581) [his] heart was filled with genuine faith. He listened to the oral traditions of the Mahāmudrā according to the Gtsang tradition, the preliminary instructions, the empowerments and teachings and there arose in [his] mind great realisation and liberation simultaneously. Then in accord with the master’s instructions he went to the place known as Yul cung gi gra skar…

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པ་བཟང་པོའི་སྤྱན་སྔར་ཕིབས།[10] བྱང་གཏེར་རིག་འཛིན་རྒོད་པའི་ཆོས་སྐོར་ལུང་དབང་ཉམས་ཁྲིད་སོགས་བསན། དེ་སྐབས་བྱང་བདག་པོ་ནམ་མཁའ་ཚེ་དབང་རྡོ་རྗེ་དང་། བདག་མོ་མངའ་བདག་ཕུན་ཚོགས་རྒྱལ་མོ་གཉིས་ཀྱི[11] ཉེ་ཁྱུང་[12] མཛད་རྙེད་བཀུར་བཟང་པོ་རྒྱུན་དུ་རྩལ་ཞིང་། ཁྲི་མཁར་བ་ནང་སོ་མཚོ་སྐྱེས་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཞེས་པ། བྱང་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་འཛིན་མའི་ཁྱོན་ལ་སྨྲ་ངན་སོགས་རིག་གནས་ལ་ཀུན་གྱི་བླང་དོར་བྲི་བའི་གནས་སུ་བྱེད་པ་དེས། ཆོས་དབང་ཞུ་བའི་ཐོགས་མ་བྱས་ཞིང་། རྣམ་ཐར་གྱི་ངོ་མཚར་གྲགས་པའི་ཇ་བོ་ཆེ་མཛད། དེ་ནས་ཀྱང་ལྷ་མའི་བཀའ་བཞིན་ཉེ་གནས་ཇོ་དཔལ་དང་། དེ་ནས་ཀྱང་བླ་མའི་བཀའ་བཞིན་ཉེ་གནས་ཇོ་དཔལ་དང་།[13] མ་ཆེན་བགྲིས་ཀྱི་གཙོ་བྱས་ཕྱག་

…Where he had an audience with Mkhyen byams pa bzang po.[14] [Here he] listened to the practical instructions, the empowerments and oral transmissions and so forth of the Byang gter teaching cycles of Rig ’dzin rgod ldem can. At that time Byang bdag po nam mkha’ tshe dbang rdo rje and the Lady mnga’ bdag phun tshogs rgyal mo acted with unsurpassable devotion and respect to this master.[15] The minister Khri mkhar ba mtsho skyes rdo rje, who was a scholar of literature in all the northern regions and everyone sought him out as a

[9] He was a ’Brug pa Lama from Skyid grong, but shared the same teacher (i.e. Byang gter) as Byams pa bzang po: Byang gter blo gros rgyal mtshan (see chapter four for details).

[10] Recte: *Phebs*

[11] Recte: *kyis*

[12] Recte: *nye bar ’khyud*

[13] Repetition

[14] Byang gter Lama, teacher of Shakya rgyal mtshan and disciple of Byang gter blo gros rgyal mtshan

[15] This sentence is slightly paraphrased from the original text, based on the work of Lha tshe ring 2002: 33: *chos rgyal dbang po lde’i yab mes byang bdag po nam mkha’ tshe dbang rdo rjes rje ’di la bsnyen bkur bla na med pa mdzad*. The agent of the sentence according to Lha tshe ring is Tshe dbang rdo rje, which would be accurate if we read the genitive particle preceding *nyi khyun mdzad* as an agentive/ergative.

expert in these areas.[16] There were no obstacles in him giving empowerments and he lived a life of great achievement and fame. Then, again, in accordance with the Lama's injunction taking ten servants who had accepted the life of the renunciant such as Jo dpal and the Ma chen bkra shis…

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གཡོག་བྱ་བྲལ་བའི་ཆོས་གཞུག་པ་བཅུ་ཁྲིད་དེ་ལྷ་ས་མཇལ་བར་ཐེབས་པ་ལས། སྣང་རྩེར་སྤྲུལ་པའི་གཏེར་སྟོན་ཞིག་པོ་གླིང་པོ[17]lacuna སྤྱན་དྲངས་བའི་གཏུམ་པོ་ཁྲོ་བོའི་ཆོས་བདག་ཡིན། ལུང་བསྟན་ཡང་མངའ་བདག་སྤྲུལ་པ་མངའ་རིས་རྒྱལ་པོ་ནི། ཆོས་རྒྱལ་སྟག་ཤམ་ཅན་ལ་གཏད་པ་ན་ བར་ཆད་བདུད་ལས་གྲོལ་ཏེ་བསྟན་པ་ཡང་ཉི་ཟླ་གསལ་བ་ཇི་བཞིན་འབྱུང་བར་གྱུར་ lacuna ཞེས་གཏེར་ཤོག་ན་སྟག་གི་ཤམ་ཐབས་ཤ་སྟགས་ལ་ཟེར་འདུག་པས་བསྟོན་གསུང་། གཟིགས་པས་ཀུན་ཡིད་ཆེས། ཁྲི་སྲོང་lacunaགྱི་ཐུགས་སྤྲུལ་ཡིན་པར་གུ་རུས་མཛད་[18] འདུག་གསུངས་། ཆོས་སྐོར་lacunaས་ lacunaཀྱི་དབང་ལུང་གདམས་པའི་གཏད་རྒྱ་གནང་། འཁོར་བ་ལས་སྒྲོལ་གྱི་ཆོས་བདག་ཡང་ཡིན། ལུང་ལས་ཀྱང་མངའ་རིག་[19] རྒྱལ་པོ་སྟག་གི་མཚན་

He went on a pilgrimage to Lhasa. At which time He [met with] the incarnation of snang rtse the treasure discoverer Zhig po gling pa (1524–1583) [lacuna] and he [Stag sham can] was invited and [there was] the prophecy that he is the master of the teaching of [the cycle of Gtum po khro bo] which was discovered as a treasure. As for the incarnate sovereign and the King of Mnga' ris and the [associated] prophesy are as follows. "If the [teachings] are entrusted to Chos rgyal stag sham can, there will be the liberation from obstacles and evil and even the teachings will be brought forth like the illumination of the moon and sun." In the treasure scrolls it says the one who is known as the Stag sham thabs sha stags[20] will expound the teachings [and] with [his] enlightened perception all [will have] faith.[21] It is said that he is

[16] Lha tshe ring (2002) has the following for this sentence: *rje 'di'i drung nas mkhas grub chen po khri mkhar ba nang so mtsho skyes rdo rjes chos 'brel gsan pa'i slob ma'i thog ma mdzad pa nas bzung mtshan snyan ngo mtshar grags pa'i rnga bo che dbus gtsang kun du khyab/*

[17] Recte: *pa*

[18] Recte: *mdzad*

[19] Recte: *ris*

[20] Refers to the mole on his body.

[21] For this passage Lha tshe ring writes (2002: 33): *mnga' ris rgyal po stag gi mtshan ma can: theg chen la mos tshe yi ming can la: chos 'di gtad rgya bgyis na phan pa 'byung*: Ehrhard offers the following translation "To the king of Mnga' ris with the

[recognised] as the heart incarnation of Khri srong [lde btsan], which was caused by the Guru.[22] [He] was given empowerments and explanations of the gter ma commission of the [lacuna] cycle of teachings.[23] He is also the master of the teaching of [the cycle] *'Khor ba las sgrol ba*. Furthermore, from the scriptures it is said "To the king of Mnga' ris having the signs of a Tiger…

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མ་ཅན། ཐེག་ཆེན་ལ་མོས་ཚེ་ཡི་མིང་ཅན་ལ། ཆོས་འདི་གཏད་པར་བྱས་ནlacunaན་པར་འགྱུར། ཞེས་གསུང་ནས། དོན་ལ་གཏེར་གསར་ཐམས་ཅད་བུམ་པ་གང་ཇོའི་ཚུལ་དང་གཞན་ཡང་ཆོས་མང་དུ་བསན་ནོ། དེ་ནས་ཇོང་ཁ་ནས་སྐུ་ཆས་རྣམས་བཞེས་ནས། རྒྱལ་བའི་དབང་པོ་དབང་ཕྱུག་རྡོ་རྗེ་ལ་བརྒྱ་འབུམ་རྣམས་ཡང་ཆེ་བའི་གྲུས་སུ་འཇོག་པ་ཕུལ། ཆོས་དབང་དུ་མ་བསན་ཞིང་། ལྷ་ས་དང་བསམ་ཡས་ཁྲ་འབྲུག་ཡེར་པ་རྣམས་མཇལ། ཡུལ་ལས་སྟོད་མདོག་གི་སྤས་སྤྲོ་ཞེས་པར མི་ལོ་བཅུ་གཉིས་བུག་སྒོ་འདག་སྦྱར་གྱི་བསྒྲུབ་པ་སྙིང་པོར་མཛད་པ་ལ། ལོ་གསུམ་བཙམ་སོང་བ་ནས། བྱང་ལྷུམ་རྗེ་བཙུན་ཧོར་མོ་དང་། བདག་མོ་སྤས་སྤྲོlacuna[24]

If the doctrine is entrusted to [him] with the name 'Tshe' and who has faith in the Mahāyāna, benefit will arise". In actuality he received [instructions] in the way of filling a vessel to the brim of the entire new gter ma, as well as many other teachings. From the district he took his personal effects and amongst other things he made 100 butter lamp offering to the victorious one, the ninth Karmapa, Dbang phyug rdo rje [1556–1603]. [He] listened and received many empowerments and went on pilgrimages to Lhasa, the whole complex of Samye, Khra 'brug and Yer pa. In Mdog gi spas spro[25] in the region of Las stod [sic],

marks of a tiger, to the one with the name 'Tshe' who has faith in the great vehicle—If to him the teaching is entrusted, benefit (for all) will arise." Ehrhard 2005: 16. In the original text this passage appears later.

[22] This may appear a little clumsy; however, in essence it refers to Guru Rinpoche's actions such as the planting of treasure seeds in the mental continuum of his disciples which would bear fruit at the appropriate time. Some concepts are readily accepted by proponents of the *gter ma* tradition, in which we find *gter ston* being referred to as *thugs sprul* etc.

[23] This is probably a direct reference to the *gter ma* allotted to him to reveal by Guru Rinpoche.

[24] Recte: *bdag mo spas spro la sogs*

[25] This presumably is Mdo spe on the northern banks of the Gtsang po, around 30 km south of La stod.

for a period of 12 human years, he performed a sealed retreat.[26] During this retreat after around three years had passed, the princess Byang rje btsun hor mo and the Lady of spas spro and [lacuna].

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པ་ཀོང་ཡུལ་པ། རང་བྱོན་ཆོས་ཟམ་པ། ལྷ་རི་རྩེ་པ་སྡེ་པ་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་ལགས་སོགས་ཀྱིས་འཐུན་རྐྱུན་དུ་ལ། གཞན་ཏིས་ lacuna[27] ཏྟགས་ཀྱང་མང་དུ་ཞིང་། སྙན་པས་ཡོངས་ཁྱབ་པར་གྱུར་ཏོ། དེ་ནས་སྐུ་འཚམས་གྲོལ་ནས། བྱང་བདག་པོ་ནམ་མཁའ་རྡོ་རྗེའི་སྲས་སྟུ་པ་lacuna བཞིན་བུའི་དབུ་བླ་མཛད། རོག་རྩོ་སྡེ་པ་ནམ་མཁའ་དཔལ་འབྱོར་ཞེས་པ་རིག་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་དུ་གྱུར་པ་དེས་དབང་ཁྲིད་ཞུས། དགོན་གཞིས་འབུལ་མཁན་གྱི་ཐོག་མ་མཛད། སྐར་ཆས་ཕུལ་བཞུགས་སྐར་མཛད་པའི་ཞུ་བ་ཕུལ། སྡེ་སྲིད་ལྷུན་པོ་རྩེ་པ་དོན་འགྲུབ་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཆོས་དབང་ཞུས། གུ་རུའི་lacuna་མཐུན་པས། དགོན་ས་སྣོག་པོ་ཕུ་ཕུལ་བ་བདག་གིར་མཛད། གཞན་ཡང་དགོན་གཞིས་ཁ་ཡར་ཕུལ་བ་ཆེར་བདག་གིར་མཛད། རྒྱལ་

Person from Kong po, the one from Rang byong chos zam, Chieftain of Lha ri rtse offered the provisions for his retreat. Furthermore, there were other miraculous signs and symbols, because of which his fame spread. Then having [completed] his retreat he acted as chief spiritual advisor to the son of Nam mkha rdo rje, the king of Byang, like former times.[28] The ruler of Rog rtso, Nam mkha’ dpal ’byor, who was a lord of knowledge, also sought Empowerments and instructions from [Stag sham can]. The *Sde pa* acted as the first patron, for a monastic estate. He offered all the land and requirements and requested him to make it his seat. Sde srid lhun po rtse pa don ’grub rdo rje requested *dharma* initiations. As it accorded with the Guru’s prophesies, he was offered the monastic seat in the upper valley of Snog po which he accepted. Furthermore the monastery and its related estates were offered and he took charge of most of those things.

[26] This refers to the practice of retreat whereby the entrance to the cave or meditation cell is completely sealed except a small hole where food and drink can be passed through.

[27] Recte: *gzhan gyis yang ngo mtshar*

[28] This may well refer to the mchod yon relationship that existed between Rig ’dzin rgod ldem can and his royal patrons. Certainly it appears as if Stag sham can had a number of royal sponsors. Nam mkha’ rdo rje may indeed be Nam mkha’ tshe dbang rdo rje (the father of Dbang po sde) as is suggested in Ehrhard (2005: 15).

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རྩེ་ནས་བདག་མོ་མངའ་བདག་རྒྱལ་མོའི་[29] སྤྱན་དྲངས། རི་ཁྲོད་དགའ་ལྡན་དུ་བཅད་རྒྱ་ཟླ་དྲུག་བར་དུ་སྦྱ་ཆས་ཕུལ། བདག་པོ་མཐུ་སྟོབས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ། དགྲ་འདུལ་ལ། ཕུན་ཚོགས་པ་སྐུ་མཆེད། སྡེ་པ་རྩེ་ཆེན་པ་བྱང་ལྷམ་ཡིད་ལ་ཡུམ་སྲས། སྡེ་པ་ནོར་བུ་ཁྱུང་རྩེ་བ། འབྲོང་རྩེ་བ་སོགས་ཁྲིམ་བདག་མཆོག་དམན་ཀུན་གྱི་[30] གཙུག་གི་ནོར་བུར་བརྟེན། སྡེ་སྲིད་ཀུན་སྤང་པ་རྣམས་སྤྱན་དྲངས།ཆོས་དབང་ཞུས། མ་ཎི་སྒྲུབ་སྡེའི་ས་སྦྱོར་མཛད། རྒྱལ་བའི་དབང་པོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་ཡིན་གསུང་། སྡེ་པའི་དགོངས་པ་ལྟར། བཀའ་བརྒྱད་རང་བྱུང་རང་ཤར་གྱི་བཟློག་ཆེན་མཛད་པའི། གཏོར་མའི་རྩེ་ལ་མེ་སྟག་འཕྲོ་བ་ཀུན་མཐུན་ངང་དུ་ཤར། དེ་ནས་ལྷོ་བྲག་གི་གནས་

From Rgyal rtse [he received] an invitation from the Lady Mnga' bdag rgyal mo. whilst meditating in the Dga' ldan mountain range for a period of six months the provisions were offered [to him] by her. The Lord Mthu stobs rnam rgyal, [the above woman's husband], Dgra 'dul, the siblings of the Phun tshogs family, The Byang princess of the Sde ba rtse chen pa family, mother and son and Sde pa nor bu khyung rtse ba[31] and many other high and low people sought him out as their principal teacher. Sde pa kun spang invited him to Pa rnams and requested *dharma* initiations. Stag sham can then consecrated the Mani lha khang. It is said this is the prophecy of Rgyal ba'i dbang po [Dbang phyug rdo rje]. In accordance with the wishes of the master from the peak of the *gtor ma's* that were used for the reversing practices according to the *gter ma* of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can: *Bka' brgyad rang byung rang shar*; flames emerged and it was seen by all [regardless].[32] After that [he] visited all the pilgrimage sites of Lho brag.

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ཀུན་མཇལ་བར་ཕེབས། རྣ་བོ་ཅོག་པོར་ཧེ་བསྟན་ནོར་བུ་ལ། བདེ་གཤེགས་འདུས་པའི་དབང་ལུང་གདམས་པས་གཙོས་ཆོས་སྐོར་ཐམས་[33] མཁར་ཆུ་སོགས་གནས་ཡུལ་རྣམས་མཇལ། ཚུར་ལམ་གདན་ས་ཆེན་པོར་ལུང་དུ་ཕེབས། རྒྱལ་སྲས་མི་ཕམ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཉིད་ཕྱག་རྡོར་དངོས་སུ་གཟིགས་གསུངས་ནས། གཏུམ་པ་ཁྲོ་བོའི་ཆོས་དབང་བསན། ཐེག་ཆེན་ནོར་བུ་སྣང་གིས་

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[29] Recte: *rgyal mos*

[30] Recte: *gyis*

[31] Located to the south of Pa snam.

[32] Lha tshe ring has a clearer version of the above: *sde srid kun spangs pas gtan zhus gyis byang gter bka' brgyad rang shar gyi bzlog chen mdzad tshe gtor ma'i rtse las me rtags 'phro ba sogs ngo mtshar ba'i mdzad rjes kyis skye 'grol mchog dman kun la thar pa'i sa bon 'jog par mdzad/.* Lha tshe ring, 2002: 34.

[33] Recte *thams cad gsan*

སྤྱོད་མཛད། ཕར་ཡང་དབང་ཆོས་མང་དུ་གསན། དེ་བདག་མོ་རྣམ་གྲོལ་སྤྱན་འདྲེན་པར་སླེབས། རྒྱལ་བའི་དབང་པོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་ཡིན་ཞེས། གཡུང་དར་རྒྱས་གླིང་གིས་སྤྱོད་མཛད། གར་lacuna་དགེ་སློང་དུ་མ་ལ་རྫོགས་ཆེན་གྱི་དབང་ཁྲིད་གནང་། རོང་བརྒྱུད་རིན་སྤུངས་སུ་ཕེབས། སྟེ་ལ་ངག་གི་དབང་པོ་བསོད་ནས་[34] ཚེ་དབང་

In [the seat of the family of Mnga' bdag Nyang ral nyi ma'i 'od zer] Rna bo cog po he gave initiations and oral transmissions of the *Bde gshegs 'dus pa* [a cycle of Nyang ral nyi ma'i 'od zer] to the Lord bstan nor bu.[35] He visited the sacred places such as Mkhar chu. On his way back he went to the valley of the great monastic seat [of Ra lung]. He said that he saw Rgyal sras mi pham chos kyi rgyal po (1543–1606) as the manifestation of Vajrapāṇi and he received the initiations of the *Gtum pa khro bo* [cycle] from him. He consecrated Theg chen nor bu sgang. Also he [Stag sham can] gave to him many initiations. Lady Rnam grol came to invite him. It is said this is the [fulfilment of the] prophecy of the Rgyal ba'i dbang po. He performed the consecration of Gyung dar rgyas gling. Wherever he went he gave instructions and initiations of Rdzogs chen to many monks. He went to Rin spungs which is in Rong brgyud area. There he listened to the initiations and dharma of The Lord of speech Bsod nams tshe dbang rdo rje.

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རྡོ་རྗེས་དབང་ཆོས་བསན། ཡུན་རིང་དུ་བཞུགས། རོང་བརྒྱུད་སྟེ་དཔོན་ཀུན་གྱི་གཙུག་ཞབས་བཟུང་བསྟན། ཤང་ཟབ་བུ་ལུང་ལ་གནས་འབྲེལ་ལ་བྱོན་པར་དགོངས། ཡར་ལམ་རྒྱལ་རྩེ་བས་སྦྱིན་བདག་བྱས། གནས་རྙིང་བ་ཞུག་གདིང་གི་བོད་ཁམས་སྤྱི་ལ་ཕན་པའི་ས་གནད་བསྒོམས། ཟ་ཕུ་ལུང་དུ་ཕེབས་ཏེ་འབྲེལ་དང་སྨོན་ལམ་དུ་མ་མཛད། སྟེ་པ་ལྷ་བུ་བ། བརྒྱ་ཆོ་བ། ཉུག་པ། རྟ་ནག་རིན་ཆེན་རྩེ་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དབང་ཆོས་ཞུས་སྦྱིན་བདག་བྱས། གུ་རུ་གློན་ཆེ་ལ་ཞིག་གསོས་དང་རབ་གནས་སྐྱར། ཨུ་རྒྱན་རྫོང་དུ་བདག་མོ་ཤར་བདག་མོའི་སྲས་ཀརྨ་བསྟན་བསྐྱང་ཡུམ་སྲས་ཀྱི་དབུ་བླ་ལར་[36] ཁྲུར། ཡར་ལམ་ཞབ་པ་བརྒྱུད། དགེ་སྡིང་དུ་ཞབས་སྐྱ་པ་ཁྲི་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཇལ་

He stayed [there] for a long time. All the chiefs of Rong brgyud venerated him as the supreme master. He contemplated a pilgrimage to Shang zab bu lung and on the way the residents of Rgyal rtse acted as [his] sponsors. The people of Gnas rnying requested him to give critical

[34] Recte: *bsod nams*
[35] This is the 3rd Yol mo sprul sku.
[36] Recte: *mar*

teachings beneficial to the whole of Tibet. He then went to Za phu lung, where he made a pilgrimage and offered many prayers. He was requested to give teachings by the people of Rta nag rin chen rtse, the people of Nyug, the people of Brgya tsho, and the Sde pa lha bu who all acted as his sponsors. He rebuilt and re-consecrated the temple of Guru blon rtse. In U rgyan rdzong the son Karma bstan srung and his mother the Shar bdag mo took him as their principal Lama. On the way he passed through Shab pa. In Dge sding he met the master Sa skya khri Rin po che, where he received the long life empowerment.

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ཆོ་དབང་གི་འབྲེལ་པ་བསམ། ཕར་འཇམ་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་འབྲེལ་པ་ཕུལ། སྡེ་པ་ཁྲ་ཁང་སས[37]་སིན་[38]བདག་བྱས། དབེན་དགོམ་[39]བྱམ་པ་རྒྱབ། རྒྱལ་ཚབ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་རིག་འཛིན་གྱི་དབུ་མཛད་སྐལ་ལྡན་གྱི་གདུལ་བྱ་མཐའ་ཡས་སྨིན་གྲོལ་ལ་བཀོད་། གཞན་ཡང་མཁས་གྲུབ་སོག་བཟློག་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཟུར་གི་གདུང་འཛིན་གསང་འུག་གི་བླ་མ་གྲྭ་བཅས། བླ་མ་དག་lacunaལར་སྒྲོལ་ཕུག་པ། ཡང་མགོན་པ། དགོན་ཕུག་པ། མཁའ་སྤོང་པ། བྲག་དཀར་བ། བྲག་གནས། ཀླ་ལུང་པ། མཁར་རྡག་པ། མགུར་ཆིང་པ། ཟ་ཕུ་བ། དཀར་པོ་lacuna སྐྲད་པ། འགྲོམ་པ་སོགས། རྙིང་མའི་བརྒྱུད་འཛིན་གྱིས་ཞལ་སློབ་དུ་མ་དང་། མང་ཐོས་ལེགས་བཤད་རྒྱ་མཚོ་

In return he gave the empowerment of Mañjuśri. The Lord Khra khang pa acted as a sponsor. He built the Solitary retreat sites for Maitreya. He appointed Phun tshogs rig 'dzin as his spiritual successor and gave instructions for the future liberation of countless beings. Furthermore, to Mkhas grub sog zlog rdo rje (1552–1624), who is the descendent (i.e. a paternal lineage) of the Lama from Gsang 'ug, and his followers including several Lamas and *lacuna* those from Yang mgon, Dgon phug, Mkha' spong, Brag dkar, Brag gnas, Gra lung, Mkhar brag, Mgur sding, Za phu, dkar po *lacuna*, Skrad, 'Grom etc and many students of the Rnying ma lineage holders, and Mang thos legs bshad rgya mtsho etc…

[37] Recte: *pas*
[38] Recte: *sbyin*.
[39] Recte: *dgon*

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ལ་སོགས་ས་ལུགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེས་ཆེན་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པ་དུ་མ་དང་། འབྲི་འབྲུག་ག་དག་[40] ལུགས་ཇོ་ལུགས་བུ་ལུགས་སོགས་རིས་མེད་ཀྱི་འདུས་པ་བརྒྱ་ཕྲག་དུ་མ་ལ་གང་ལ་གང་འདོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་སྦྱིན་སྩལ། ཡབ་ཡུམ་གྱི་དོན་དུ་ལྷ་བརྒྱད་བཞེངས། གཞན་ཡང་གྲུབ་པའི་རྟགས་དང་། ཡིད་དམ་ཞལ་གཟིགས་སྔོན་[41] པར་མཁྱེན་ཚུལ་རྣམས་མང་དུ་འདུག་ཀྱང་འདིར་མ་སྤྲོས། རྒྱས་པ་ནི་རྣམ་ཐར་ན་གསལ་ལོ། རང་གཞན་དོན་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བྱ་བས་དགོངས་པ་རྫོགས་པར་མཛད་ནས། ཁྲག་སྐྱུག་ཞེས་པ་ཆུ་མོ་ཕག་གི་ལོ་ཧོར་ཟླ་གསུམ་པའི་ཚེས་བཅོ་ལྔའི་ཆོས་དབྱིངས་སུ་ཐིམ་མོ།། ༈༈

And many of the great masters and *bhikṣu*s, the followers of the different religious traditions of 'Bri, 'Brug, Dga' ldan, Jo lugs, Bu lugs etc to all the hundreds of thousands of followers who had all assembled without sectarian differences, was given whatever teachings [they] wished. Eight Statues were commissioned which were dedicated to the benefit of his father and mother. Furthermore having many signs of accomplishment and even though there exist many aspects of his extraordinary life such as foresight and the visions of tutelary divinities, they will not be discussed here because a detailed account [of these things] are made evident in [his] biography. Having acted for the welfare of others and himself and having fully accomplished his intentions his body dissolved into emptiness on the fifteenth day of the third month of the Water female Pig year, [1623] which is known as Khrag skyug.[42]

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དཔལ་ཨུ་རྒྱན་lacunaཉི་ཟླའི་རྒྱན་ཅན་ལས། ཆོས་རྒྱལ་གདུང་རྒྱུད་གཙང་མ་རྣམས། སྐྱིད་མོ་ལུང་དང་ཀུ་ཐང་བཙུམ། རོང་བཙན་རྣམས་ལ་

[40] Recte: *dga' ldan*
[41] Recte: *mngon par*
[42] This is the 57th year of a rab byung.

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ཤིག[43]། ཞེས་པའི་སྨས་ཡུལ་ཁོ་ནར་དགོངས་པ་ལྟར་ཅིང་། ལྷག་པར་མཐའ་དམག་ལྷག་པའི་དུས་ཀྱི་འཕོ་འགྱུར་དང་། སྤྱི་སྲིད་གཙང་པ་ཡང་ཆབ་སྲིད་མི་བརྟན་པ་སོགས་དུས་གསུམ་སྒྲིབ་མེད་དུ་གཟིགས་པ་ནས། སྨས་ཡུལ་དུ་སྤྱི་སྲིད་གཙང་པར་དགོངས་པ་ནན་ཏེས་ཞུ་བ་མཛད་ཀྱང་དགོངས་པ་མ་ཡང་། འོན་ཀྱང་གོན་དུ་ཏུས་ཡུལ་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་གནས་སྒོ་ཕྱེ་བ་མཛད་མི་མང་དུ་བྱུང་ཀྱང་ཇི་ལྟར་ཕེབས་པ་ཤིག་མ་བྱུང་འདུག། ད་ཆ་དུས་ལ་བབས་པ་ཡིན་གསུང་ནས་གནས་འཛིན་པར་སྒྲུབ་ཆེན་བསྟན་པ་རྒྱ་མཚོ། ལ་ཐབས་པ་བསྟན་འཛིན་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཟླའུ་སྒྲུབ་ཆེན་དོན་འགྲུབ་དཔལ་བཟང་བཅས་ཇོང་བྲད་མཛད།[44] དེ་ནས་རིང་པོར་མ་ལོན་པར། རྡོ་རྗེ་གླིང་པའི་ལུང་བྱང་གསལ་བའི་སྨོན་མེ་ལས་

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འབྲས་མོ་གཤོངས་སུ་ནང་གི་གནས་གཞི་ཆགས་པའི་སྔ་རྟགས་སུ། ཁྲི་སྲོང་ལྡེ་བཙན་གདུང་བརྒྱུད་ཆིག་བྲེའུ་ཁྲིའི་དེད་པ་བཞིན་འབྱུང་བར་ཞེས་གསུང་པ་ལྟར། རྟུབ་ཉམས་དྲག་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ཆུ་ཕོ་རྟའི་ལོར་ཟླ་གསུམ་པའི་ཉེར་ལྔ་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ཆེན་པོ་གཞིས་རྩེ་ནས་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་སྙན་གྲགས་ཀུན་ལ་ཕྱི་ཕྱག་མཛད་ནས་ཡབ་སྲས་ཆས་ཅིག་འབྲས་གཤོངས་སུ་ཕེབས། གནས་ཀྱི་སྒོ་ཕྱེ་ནས་བཟུང་གནས་དམ་ཅན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་རྣམས་ལ་བསྟན་པ་གོང་འཕེལ་གྱི་བཀའ་སྒོ་དམ་ཞག། ཉམས་བསོའི་འཁྲུས་གསོལ་བསངས་མཆོད་བུམ་གཏེར་རབ་གནས་སོགས་མཛད་པ་བསླབ་ཆེ་གནང་ངོས། ལོ་དེའི་ཧོར་ཟླ་བརྒྱད་པའི་ཆོས་གསུམ་གནས་མཐིལ་ཡོག་བསམ་དུ་བྱོན། ལུང་བསྟན་བཀའ་རྒྱ་ལས། ཆོས་རྒྱལ་གདུང་བརྒྱུད་སྔགས་འཆང་རས་པའི་ཚུལ་གྱི་འབུ་སྲིན་འདུར་བགྲོས་ཚུལ་གྱི་གནས་སྒོ་འབྱེད་གསུང་པ་དང་། ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ཁྲི་

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སྲོང་ལྡེ་བཙན་གྱི་གསང་བའི་གབ་ལུང་ཟབ་མོ་ལུང་བདུན་ལས། འགྲོ་བ་དེད་དཔོན་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཐོག་མའི་དུས་ན་ང་ཡི་རྒྱལ་བརྒྱུད་འཛུག། ཅས་གསུང་པ་རྣམས་ཐོག་དུ་ཁེལ། དེ་ནས་འདུས་བྱས་ཀྱི་དགེ་རྩའི་ནང་ནས་ལྷ་ཁང་དང་། དགེ་བདུན་གྱི་སྡེ་འཛུགས་པ་ཕན་ཡོན་ཆེ་བ་དང་། ལྷག་པར་རཏྣའི་གཏེར་བྱང་ལས། གནས་དེར་ལྷ་ཁང་མཆོད་རྟེན་སྒྲུབ་སྡེ་ཙུག།[45] བོད་ཡུལ་ལོ་བརྒྱའི་བར་དུ་བདེ་བར་འགྱུར། ཞེས་གསུངས་པ་སོགས་ལ་དགོངས་པས། སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་དང་། སྲས་ཕུན་ཚོ་[46] ཚེ་རིང་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་མངའ་དབང་བསྟན་འཛིན་པོ་ཡབ་སྲས་བཀའ་གྲོས་མཛད་ནས་ཉི་མ་ཞེས་པ་ཆུ་ལུག་ཧོར་ཟླ་བཅུ་གཅིག་པའི་མེ་མིག་གི་ཆོས་ཕུར་རྒྱལ་འཛོམས་པའི་འགྲུབ་སོ

[43] Probably means that they must go.
[44] Probably this should read *'dzoms phral mdzad.*
[45] Recte: *tsug na*
[46] Recte: *Phun tshogs*

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རིན་ཆེན་ཐང་གླིང་དུ་ལྷ་ཁང་དམར་པོའི་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་རྟེན་དང་བཅས་པ་བཞེངས་པའི་ཞལ་བཀོད་མཛད་ཅིང་། ས་འདུལ་ནས་གཟུང་རབ་གནས་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཕུར་པའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་ཞལ་ཕྱེ་ཞིང་། རབ་གནས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དགའ་སྟོན་རྫོགས་ལྡན་གྱི་དཔལ་འབྱུན་པ་ལྟར་གནང་བས། གནས་ཀྱི་ལྟེ་བུ་རྩུབ་ཉམས་མི་མཐུན་པའི་ཕྱོགས་ཐར་རོ་[47] ཐམས་ཅད་ཞི་ཞིང་འཐུན་རྐྱེན་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་དཔལ་འབྱོར་དབྱར་མཚོ་ལྟར་རྒྱས་ཤིང་། བོད་ཁམས་ཀྱི་བདེ་ཐབས་རྒྱ་བས་ཉིན་མོར་བྱེད་པའི་ཤིས་བརྗོད་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་སྒོ་བཟང་པོ་འགྲིག་པ་མཛད། དེ་སྐབས། སྣང་ཧོག་གི་ཞལ་ངོ་ཨ་པ་རྡོ་རྗེར་བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྟགས་བརྒྱད་''རྒྱལ་སྲིད་སྣ་བདུན་སོགས་ཀྱི་[48] དབང་བསྐུར་གནས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོར་བསྐོས་མཚན་ཡང་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ཞེས་གནང་ནས་མཆོད་ཡོན་དུ་གྱུར། གཅིག་

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གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་དེར་བསྟན་འགྲོའི་ལེགས་བྱས་སྤེལ་བའི་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་བཟང་པོའི་མ་ཎི་སྒྲུབ་སྡེ་ཞིག་འཛུགས་པའི་དགོངས་བཅད་མཛད་པའི་ཚུལ་ཡང་། སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་གཙང་དུ་བཞུགས་སྐབས་ལྷ་ལྡན་དུ་གནས་མཇལ་བྱོན་པའི་ངོ་ཤུག་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་རྣམ་གཉིས་ལ་རྒྱང་ཕྱག་གི་བསྐོར་བ་འབུམ་སྡེ་བསགས་པ་གནང་གྲུབ་རྗེས། རྒྱལ་བ་ཉི་མའི་གཉེན་དང་འཕགས་པ་བཅུ་ཅིག་ཞལ་གྱི་སྤྱན་སྔར་སྨོན་ལམ་ཤིས་བརྗོད་མཐའ་བརྟན་གྱི་གསོལ་བཏབ་མཛད་དུས། རང་བྱོན་འཕགས་པའི་ཐུགས་ཁ་ནས་སེམས་དཔའ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཁ་འོད་དཀར་པོ་མདའ[49]– སྨྱུགས་ཙམ་གྱི་འབྲེལ་བ་ཕྱག་ཕྱི་སྐུ་གཉེར་lacuna ་མཐོང་བའི་དད་པའི་གནས་སུ་གྱུར་ཞིང་རྒྱུ་མཚན་དེས་དགེ་འདུན་གྱི་ཆེ་ཞིག་དང་ཇི་སྲིད་བསྐལ་པར་མ་ཎི་དུང་འཁོར་གྱི་རྒྱུན་མི་མཛད་པའི་དགོངས་པ་ཐུབ[50] ་མོའི་མི་ཐང་ཞེས་lacuna

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ཧོར་ཟླ་བཅུ་གཅིག་པའི་ཚེས་ལྔའི་གཟའ་སྐར་བཟང་བར་འཛུགས་པར་མཛད། དེ་ནས་མངའ་བདག་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་བཀྲིས་སྡིང་སུ་ཕེབས་གནས་ཕྱི་ལྟར་ན་རྒྱལ་བ་ཞི་ཁྲོའི་ཕོ་བྲང་། ནང་ལྟར་ན་རྡོ་རྗེ་ལུས་ཀྱི་རྩ་གནས་ཚུལ། གསང་བ་ལྟར་ན་རང་བཞིན་རྫོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དུ་གཟིགས་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས། གནས་ཀྱི་ལྟེ་བ་ཏག་དཀར་བཀྲིས་སྡིངས་འཁྲུལ་མེད་དུ་ངོས་འཛིན་གནང་ནས་བཀྲིས་དགེ་ལེགས་ཀྱི་དགོན་པ་མཛད་ཅིང་། དཔལ་པདྨ་འབྱུང་གནས་ཀྱིས་ལུང་དང་འཐུན་པར་གཟིགས་ས་གླང་ཧོར་ཟླ་དགུ་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་གྱི་ཚེས་''དགེ་བར་གདན་ས་ཟིལ་གནོན་གྱིས་བཟུང་བ་མཛད། སྟག་ལོ་ཧོར་ཟླ་ལྔ་པའི་གནས་དག་ཉིན་ཟིལ་གནོན་དུ་བསམ་ཡས་ཆོས་སྐྱོང་སྐུ་ཁོག་ལ་ཕེབས་ཤིང་ངོ་མཚར་བའི་ཚོ་འཕྲུལ་དུ་མ་སྟོན་པ་མཛད་ངེས་ཤེས་བསྐྱེད་ཅིང་ཆོས་སྐྱོངས་ཆེན་པོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་དང་

47 Omit *Thar ro*
48 *kyis*
49 Recte: *Mda’*
50 Recte: *Sab*

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བསྟུན་   རྒྱལ་བའི་སྲས་ཕུན་ཚོགས་ཚེ་རིང་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་དང་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ཅlacunaས་མཆོད་ཡོན་lacuna་གྲོས་གནང་ནས་ལྷོ་བོད་སྐྲ་སེར་ཐམས་ཅད་བསྐུལ་བ་མཛད་དེ།   ལྕགས་ཡོས་ལོ་ཧོར་ཟླ་དང་པོའི་ཚེས་ལྔའི་གཟའ་སྐར་དུས་སྦྱོར་མཆོག་ཏུ་དགེ་བའི་ཉིན་དུ་བྱམས་པ་ལྷ་ཁང་དང་སྤྱི་ཏར་ཅོག་གི་རྨང་གཏིང་ཞིང་།   ནང་བཞུགས་རྒྱལ་བ་བྱམས་པའི་སྐུ་དང་གཟུང་འབུལ་སོགས་ཞལ་བཀོད་ལེགས་པར་གྲུབ་པའི་དུས་འཁྲིག་དུ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་གནས་ནས་གློ་བོ་ཆེ་པ་སྤོས་རྒྱལ་ཨ་མགོན་བསམ་འགྲུབ་རབ་བརྟེན་དང་།   ཨ་ཡུམ་ཉིན་ཟླ་རྒྱལ་མོ་སྐྱིད་ཞལ་གྱི་གདན་འདྲེན་ཞུ་བ་མཛད་པས།   ལོ་གཅིག་ཙམ་བཞུགས་གདན་འཛགས།   བཀའ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བདུད་རྩི་སྩེ་པས་དབུས་སྐྱེ་རྒུ་རྣམས་སྨིན་པར་གྱུར་ནས་རོང་བརྒྱུད་བསྐུ[51]

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རྒྱལ་lacuna་རྣམ་ཐར་རྫོང་།   གློ་ཁ་སོགས་རྒྱལ་ཕྲན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྙན་བཀུན[52] ཡང་དག་ཞུས།   lacuna   བྱང་གཏེར་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཕུར་པའི་བསྒྲུབ་པ་གནང་བས་lacunaལ་པོར་བྱོན་ཡང་ལེ་ཤོད་ཀྱི་སྒྲུབ་ཕུག་དུ་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཕུར་པའི་སྒྲུབ་པ་གནང་།   རྡོ་རྗེ་གཡོན་ནུའི་ལྷ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཞལ་གཟིགས་བྱུང་ཚུལ་རྒྱས་པ་རྣམ་ཐར་དུ་གསལ་བ་དང་།   བལ་པོའི་རྒྱལ་པོས་ཀྱང་ཞབས་ཏོག་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་ཕུལ།   དེ་ནས་མང་གོར་རྒྱལ་པོ་མྣཀྟ་ནྡ་ཛ་ཧེན་ཌྷུ་པྣ་ཏི་དང་མཇལ།   རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཤིན་ཏུ་འགྲིག་པས་མཆོད་ཡོན་དུ་གྱུར།   རྒྱའི་ཀ་ཀོ་ཥྐ་རི་ཁྲལ་པ་བརྒྱ་ཡོད་པ་བཅས་མཆོད་གཞིས་སུ་འཕུལ།   ཤི་ལམ་བརྒྱུད་ནས་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་སུ་ཧོར་ཟླ་གཉིས་པའི་ཚེས་བཅུའི་དུས་བཟང་པོར་གོང་མ་སེམས་དཔའ་དེ་ཉིད་རྒྱ་ནས་བྱོན་པ་འགྲིག་པའི་ཕྱོག་གནས་

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མཛད་རབ་སྟོན་སོགས་ཀྱི་lacunaཔ་lacuna[53] ནང་གྲུབ་ནས།   གན་མ་ཧེ་སྒྲུབས་སྤྱི་ཡང་བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྤྱིངས་ལ་འཛུགས་དུང་ག་ལྷང་ཡིན་འདུག་རུང་།   གནས་གཞི་ཆགས་པ་ག་བའི་སྐབས་མ་ཧེ་དུང་ཕྱུར་ཐོག་མ་དང་བུམ་ཆུ་འཛུགས་པ་རྣམས་ལྷ་ཁང་དམར་པོར་མཛད་lacunaདུང་འཕྱུར་ལྔ་པར་བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྤྱིངས་སུ་གནང་བའི་རྟགས་དུང་སོ་བུམ་ཆུ་མི་བསྐམས་མི་རུལ་ཞིང་དྲི་བཟར[54] འཕྲོ་བ་སོགས་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་འཕགས་པའི་ཐུགས་རྗེར་དེས་ཤིས་བསྐྱེད་པ་དེའི་དད་ལྡན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བསྔགས་པའི་འོས་སུ་གྱུར།   གནས་མཆོག་དེ་ཉིད་དུ་བསྐལ་ལྡན་གྱི་སྐྱེས་བུ་མཆོག་དམན་མཐའ་དག་ལ་གསང་སྔགས་སྨིན་མ་རྒྱུད་བུམ་གྱི་ཆོས་འཁོར་བསྐོར་ཞིང་བསྟན་འགྲོའི་བདེ་ཐབས་ལ་དགོངས་པའི་སྐུ་མཚམས་ཀྱང་ཡུན་རིང་པོར་གནང་བས་ཚད་མེད་ཐུགས་རྗེའི་གཟིགས་lacunaཔོ་པ་ཡང་།

[51] Recte: *Rang rgyud bskul*
[52] Recte: *Bkur*.
[53] Probably: *Rab gnas sogs gyi dga' ston legs pa grub nas*
[54] Recte: *bzang*

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འཕགས་པའི་ལུང་ལས། བསོད་ནམས་བསྐལ་བ་རབ་འགྱུར་པ་རྣམས[55] འཕགས་པའི་སྤྲུལ་པ་ཞིག་གིས་སྣ་དྲངས་ཏེ། འཕགས་པ་ཞིང་ཁམས་འབྲས་མོ་ཤོང་དུ་བྲོས། ཡུལ་དེ་བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱིས་བོན་ཡིན། ཤེས[56] གསུངས་པ་ལྟར་འཕགས་པའི་སྤྲུལ་པ་ཡིན་པའང་གཞིད་གང་ལྟར་ནས་འདིར་རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྟན་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དང་དགོས[57] སྔས་ཡུལ་གྱི་བསྟན་པ་འཛིན་སྐྱོང་སྤེལ་གསུམ་བསྡུ་བ་རྣམ་བཞིའི་མཛད་པའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོའི་གྲིབ་བསིལ་ཀུན་ལ་ཁྱབ་པར་གྱུར་ནས་གདོང་ངན་ཞེས་པ་མེ་སྤྲེལ་ལོའི་ཆོས་བཅུའི་ཉིན་དཔལ་པསྒྲུ་འོང[58] ཀྱི་ཞིང་དུ་གཤེགས་པའི་དགོངས་པ་གཏད་ཚུལ་ཡང་། སྔོན་དུ་གནང་བཛlacuna་གསུང་མགུར་དུ། ཛ་ཡབ་པདྨ་འོད་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་ཞེས། རིག་འཛིན་པདྨ་བཞུགས་པའི་ཞབས་དྲུང་དུ། གྲུང་ཀྱི་མངའ་འཕང་བཞིན་

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དུ་ལྟབ་འགྲོ་ཡང་། ཞེས་པའི་དོན་ལྟར། གདུལ་ཙར་རྟུར་པ་རྣམས་lacuna[59] ཞལ་གདམས་གནང་ནས་ཆོས་བཅུའི་ཉིན་སྐུ་སླེལ་བའི་ཚུལ་བསྟན་པར་lacuna་ཆོས་བཅུའི་ཚོགས་བྲལ་དུ་དམ་ཅན་སྐྱུ་ཁོག་ལ་བྱོན་ཏེ་གཞི་སླིགས་མ་ལྔ་བདེའི་གནས་ཀབས་སུ་ངེད་རྣམས་སྤྱན་འདྲེན་གྱི་འོས་སུ་ཆེ་ཡང་། ད་དུང་བསྟན་འགྲོའི་ཆེད་དུ་ཞབས་པད་བརྟན་དགོས་ཞེས་ནན་གྱི་ཞུས། གཞན་ཡང་lacuna་རྒྱལ་བའི་སྲས་ཕུན་ཚོགས་ཆེ་རིང་མངའ་དབང་བསྟན་འཛིན་དཔལ་བཟང་གི་ཨུས[60] གྲ་རིགས་ཡོན་བདག་བཅས་ཀྱི[61] ཀྱང་བརྟན་བཞུགས་ཞུས་བར། རྗེའི[62] ཕེབས་སྐོར་ཆེ་ཚད་རྫོགས་ནས་ལོ་ལྔ་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་བསྟན་འགྲོའི་ཆེད་དུ་བཞད་པ་ཡིན། ད་ནི་རྒད་པོ་བསམ་པ་རྫོགས་རས[63]- པ་ཡིན་གསུངས་lacuna

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གསུང[64] ང་ཡི་དུས་མཆོད་ཀྱང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྟག་ཤམ་ཅན་གྱི་མཆོད་པ་ཕུལ་རྗེས་གྱིས་ནས་བཀའ་སྩལ་ནས་ཆོས་བ་lacuna་བསྟན་lacuna་དེའི་ཉིན་སྐུན་གདུང་བཞུགས་པའི་ཕྱོགས་ནམ་མཁའ་དབང་པོའི་གོས་ཀྱི་འབྲལ་བ་དང་། རྗེ་ཉིད་ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་དཀྱིལ་དཀྲུང་མཛད་ནས་གཤེགས་པ་མཐར་lacuna་ལ་ལས་འོད་དཀར་པོའི་མཆོད་རྟེན་ཀྱི་དབྱིབས་རྩེ་ནམ་མཁའ་མཐོང[65] སུ་སླིགས་པ་མཐོང་བ་སོགས་ངོ་མཚར་ཅན་གྱི་ལྟས་བཟང་པོ་སྣ་ཚོགས་བཅས་མྱུ་ངན་ལ་འདས་སོ།

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55 Recte: *Rab tu 'gyur pa rnams*
56 Recte: *Zhes*
57 Recte: sgos
58 Recte: *'od*
59 Recte: *la*
60 Recte: *dbus*
61 Recte: *kyis*
62 Recte: *rjes*
63 Recte: *ran*
64 Repetition
65 Recte: *mthongs su*

APPENDIX SIX

EXCERPTS FROM LHA BSTUN CHEN PO'S LAM YIG

Excerpt One: Opening Passages

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།དེ་ཡང་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་ཀོང་པོའི་ཡུལ་ནས་འཁོར་བའི་སྐབས་སུ། སྤྱིར་གྱི་དུས་གནས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་འགྱུར་ཚུལ་མི་རྟག་ཅིང་ཆ་ནས་དུས་ཀྱི་སྙིགས་མ་ལ་ཐུག་པས་སྐྱོ་བ་དང་། ཁྱད་པར་བྱང་ཕྱོགས་ཀྲ་རིགས་མིའི་དབང་པོ་སླུ་མཆེད། སྐྱིའུ་

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༄༅། གདོང་གོང་མ་ཆེན་པོ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྟེ་ལ་སོགས་པར་དབྱིངས་པ་ཆེན་མོ་ནས་དགོངས་པོག་བྱུང་འདུག་པ་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་སུ་རང་གླིང་ཡང་སྡུག་ཅིང་བསྡུལ་བའི་གཏམ་ཁོན་ཐོས་པ་དང་། སྐྱེས་ཆེན་དམ་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་དུས་མཐའི་སྐྱེ་འགྲོ་རྣམས་སྦས་ཡུལ་སྙིག་དགོས་པའི་ལུང་བསྟན་ཤིན་ཏུ་མང་བ་མཐོང་ཞིང་། བདག་ཅག་གི་སྟོན་པ་ཟས་གཙང་སྲས་པོའི་ཞལ་སྔ་ནས་ལུང་བསྟན་རྒྱལ་པོའི་མདོ་ལས། ཤཱ་རིའི་བུ་ཉོན་ཅིག་ང་མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་ནས་རྒྱལ་པོའི་གདུང་སོབ་སྐྱོན་མ་འདྲ་བ་ལན་བདུན་འབྱུང་། དེའི་ཕྱི་མ་ལ་ལྔ་བརྒྱ་ཕྲག་བཅུའི་ཐམ་ཤར། དེའི་དུས་ན་ངའི་

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འཁོར་བཞི་པོ་རི་བོ་དན་ཏིག་གི་གླིང་དང་། ཆུ་བོ་དོན་སྙིང་གི་མགོ་དང་། ཕྱིའི་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གླིང་དང་། བས་མཐའ་ནགས་ཀྱི་རོང་ལ་སོང་ཞིག རྒྱ་གར་དང་། ཨུ་རྒྱན་དང་། ཁ་ཆེ་དང་། སིང་ཏ་དང་། བལ་དང་། ལི་ཡུལ་དང་། སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པའི་གནས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྷོ་ནུབ་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་དོ་གླིང་ལ་སོང་ཞིག བྱང་ཕྱོགས་ཁ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཡུལ་དུ་དུས་ཐ་མ་ལ་བསྟན་པ་དར་བར་འགྱུར་གྱི། དེ་ཡང་རིགས་གསུམ་མགོན་པོས་ལུང་སྟོན་ལ། ལྔ་བརྒྱ་ཐ་མ་ལ་བོད་ཐམས་ཅད་པས་མཐའ་ལ་སོང་ཞིག ནགས་ཀྱི་རོང་ལ་བྲོས་ཤིག ཅས་ལུང་སྟོན་ཅིག ཤོད་ཅིག ཅས་དང་། ཁྱད་པར་རྒྱལ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་གཟུགས་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་གཉིས་པ་སྐྱེས་མཆོག་འཇའ་ཚོན་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཀྱང་། ལས་འབྲས་བསླུ་བ་མེད་པ་དགག་ཏུ་མ་བཏུབ་པར་བརྟེན། ད་ནི་མྱུར་དུ་ཧོར་སོག་མཐའ་མི་ཚན་ཆེ་བ་འོང་དུ་ཉེ་ཞིང་། དུས་མཐའི་སྐྱེ་འགྲོ་རྣམས་སྡུག་བགལ་གྱི་འདམ་དུ་ཚུད་པར་འགྱུར་བས། བུ་སློབ་དང་

429.1

༄༅། སྦྱིན་བདག་ཤ་ཚ་དགོས་ཉེ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཆགས་ཞེན་སྤང་ལ། སྦས་ཡུལ་དབེན་པའི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་སོང་ཞིག ཅས་བཀའ་ནན་གནང་བ་ཡིག་ལ་ངེས་པར་སེམས་སྐྱེ།

Excerpt Two: In Sikkim

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དེ་ནས་ཟླ་བ་བཅུ་པའི་དཀར་ཕྱོགས་དགའ་བ་དང་པོའི་ཆོས་ལ་གནས་ཆེན་འབྲས་མོ་གཤོང་གི་ནོར་འཛིན་གྱི་ལྟེ་བ་ནོར་བུའི་སྣང་དུ་འབྱོར་ཏེ།   སྔོན་བྱོན་རྗེ་འབངས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཆོམ་བུ་སྒྲུབ་པའི་ཕྲུ་མཆོག་ཆེན་པོ་ལང་གྲོ་དཀོན་མཆོག་འབྱུང་གནས་ཀྱི་གདུང་གི་ཕྲེང་བ་ལས་རིམ་པར་བྱོན་པའི་རིགས་ཀྱི་སྔགས་འཆང་དམ་པ་མཐུ་སྟོབ་དབང་པོའི་གཟིམ་ཁང་དུ་གནས་མལ་ཕབ།   ནོར་འཛིན་ཆེ་རིང་བུ་ཁྲིད་ལ་སོགས་ཡབ་ཡུམ་ཀུན་གྱི་མི་ཕྱེད་པའི་དད་མདུན་རྩེ་གཅིག་པའི་ངང་ནས།   རྣལ་འབྱོར་མཆེད་དང་བཅས་པ་ལ་ཞག་འགའི་བར་དུ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་མཛད།   དེའི་ཚེ་སྔོན་གོམ[1] ཀྱི་བག་ཆགས་བཟང་པོའི་མཐུ་དང་ལྡན་ཅིང་།   རིང་མོ་ཞིག་ནས་སློན་ལམ་གྱི་མཚམས་ལེགས་པར་སྦྱར་བའི་འབྲས་བུ་ནར་སོན་ཏེ།   མཁའ་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་དཔལ་མོའི་ལྗོངས་ཡངས་པར་དབང་བསྐུར་བའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ཡབ་སྲས་བློན་འཁོར་དང་བཅས་པ་རྫོགས་ལྡན་བསྐལ་པའི་སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་མ་ཉམས་པར་ངང་གི་ལྷུན་ཆགས་ཤིང་།   འདོད་ཡོན་མི་ཟད་པ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་བསམ་གྱི་མི་ཁྱབ་པ་དང་ལྷན་དུ་རིན་ཐང་དང་བཅས་པའི་

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༄༅།   ནོར་དབྱིག་གི་རིགས་བྱེད་མང་པོ་སྣམ་སྤེ་པེབ།[2]   བྱེ་ནང་གི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བཟང་པོ་འགྲིག   སྐར་རྒྱལ་སྲིད་སྣ་བདུན་བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྫོང་རྟགས་ལ་སོགས་དཔའ་བོ་བརྟན་བཞུགས་དང་བཅས་ཏེ་བསྟན་པའི་སྦྱིན་བདག་ཆེན་པོར་མངའ་གསོལ། དེ་ནས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཚངས་པ་ལྷའི་མེ་ཏོག་གི་གདུང་འཛིན་པ་རྒྱལ་སྲས་པོ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་དཔལ་བཟང་པོ་དང་། གནས་ཆེན་གྱི་ཕྱི་ནང་དུ་ཞབས་ཡུན་རིང་མོ་ནས་ཆགས་པའི་མཚུངས་མེད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྗེ་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་སོགས་ཀྱང་རིམ་པར་མཇལ། བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པོས་བཞེས་ལེན་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པར་མཛད།

Page 562.1[3]

སྔོན་བྱོན་སྤྲུལ་པའི་རྒྱལ་བློན་གྱི་བཞུགས་ཁྲི་བྲག་དཀར་བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྡིངས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།   གླུའི་བུ་མོ་མཛེས་ལྡན་མས་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཨིནྡྲ་བྷཱུ་ཏི་ལ་ཕུལ་བའི་ཡིད་བཞིན་གྱི་ནོར་བུ་བཞུགས་པའི་གཏེར་གནས་སྣང་པའི་གཏམ་གྱིས་གསུམ་ཁྱབ་པར་གྲུར་བ་གང་ཉིད་ཡིད་ལ་ཇེ་ལྷུར་སྨོན་པའི་གཏམ་ཁོ་ན་གླེང་ཞིང་།   དེའི་ཚེ་ཁོ་བོ་ཡང་དེ་ལྟར་ཤིན་ཏུ་འདུན་ཏེ་མཁའ་སྤྱོད་རྒྱལ་བའི་གནས་འཛིན་གྱི་རི་པ་རྣམས་ལ། ཕྱི་ལྟར་གནས་ཀྱི་དབྱིབས་ལུགས།   ཕྱི་ནང་སྒོ་ཡི་གཏད་ཕྱོགས་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་རྣམས་གཏིང་ཕྱིན་པར་བསྙད།   ནང་ལྟར་གུ་རུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེས་མ་འོངས་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ལ་དགོངས་པའི་གནས་ཡིག   ཡང་བྱང་།   གསལ་བྱེད་ལྡེ་མིག་སོགས་ལ་བརྟག

[1] Recte: *goms*

[2] Recte: *snams*. I am unsure what peb means in this context.

[3] Between 557 and 562.1 there is an extensive poetical passage which I have chosen to omit here.

ཞིབ་ལེགས་པར་བྱས། གསང་བ་ལྷར་རྩ་གསུམ་དམ་ཅན་གྱི་ཚོགས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་སྟེ་བརྟག་པ་ཞུས་པ་ལས། ལྷོ་མོན་གྱི་སྐད་དུ་སེང་གདམ་ཞེས་པའི་རིའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་ཡིན་བའི་ངེས་བ་ཙུང་ཟད་སྐྱེད་དེ། ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཕུན་ཚོགས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་སློན་འཁོར་གྱི་[4] ལམ་གྱི་འཚོ་ཆས་ཉེར་བདོག་ཏུ་མཛད་དེ། མི་ཁྲི་ཟད་པའི་ལོ་ཧོར་ཟླ་བཅུ་གཅིག་པའི་ཡར་ཚེས་དང་པོའི་ཉིན་རི་བོ་དེའི་སྟོར་ཉེར་བར་བགྲོད་དེ།

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[4] Recte: *gyis*

APPENDIX SEVEN

THE LHO MON GTSHONG GSUM AGREEMENT

1

ཧོ་འགོངས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ གསེན་དུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ ན་མོ་ཐོག་མེའི་[1] དགོན་པོ་ཆོས་སྐུ་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་ནས་ ད་ལྟའི་རྩ་བའི་བླམ་[2] ཡན་གྱི་ཆོས་སྐྱོངས་བའི་གསུང་མ་དམ་ཆེན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཚོགས་

2

དང་བཅས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་མ་ཡེང་པར་དྲག་པོའི་སྐྱུར་བཞེང་སྟེ་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ ལྷོངས་འདིར་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ཆོས་ཡོན་[3] ཡབ་སྲས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པའི་ལྷ་[4] དང་གསུང་མ་ ཆོས་སྐྱོངས་ཕོ་རྒྱུད་གསུང་མ་མོ་

3

རྒྱུད་ བཀའ་སྲུང་དམ་ཆེན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཚོགས་དང་བཅས་པ་རྣམས་ཡང་སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་མ་ཡེང་[5] པར་རྔམ་འཇིགས་བྲབ་[6] པོའི་སྐྱུར་ཡང་ནས་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ དཔལ་ཆེན་གྱི་མགོན་པོ་མ་ཧཱ་ཀཱ་ལ་མ་ནིང་ནག་པོའི་མཆེད

4

སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཡོན་བསྟོན་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཀྱི་མགོན་པོ་ བཟའ་ཡི་དགེ་ཉེན་ (ར་ཏུ་ལ) སྣང་སྲིད་ཀྱི་ལྷ་སྲིན་སྡེ་བརྒྱད་རྣམས་ཡང་སྐུ་མ་ཡེང་[7] པར་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ གུ་རུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བཀའ་བསྟད་པའི་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡབ་ཡུམ་བློན་འབང་[8]

5

འཁོར་བཅས་རྣམས་དང་ ཐུགས་མཆང་འཁོར་བདུད་བཙན་གླུ་གསུམ་ རྣམས་སྲས་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཤུགས་ལྡན་ རྡོ་རྗེ་དགྲ་འདུལ་ སྤྱི་ཏར་ རྒྱལ་པོའི་མཆེད་ རྒྱལ་པོ་གསར་སྙིངས་[9] དང་སྡེ་བརྒྱད་འདྲེག་པའི་མཆོགས་དང་བཅས་རྣམས་སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་

[1] *thog mo'i*
[2] *Blam* is a Sikkimese word corresponding to *bla ma*.
[3] Recte: *mchod yon*
[4] Recte: *lha*
[5] Recte: *g.yeng*
[6] Recte: *drag po*
[7] Recte: *g.yeng*
[8] Recte: *'bangs*
[9] Recte. *rnying*

6

མ་ཡེང[10]་པར་དྲག་པོའི་སྐུར་བཞེངས་སྟེ་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ ལྷག་དོན་སྦས་པའི་ལྗོངས་འདིའི་གཏེར་བདག་གངས་ཆེན་མཛོད་ལྔ་སྟག་རྩེ་བསྙེན་ཆེན་ཐང་ལྷ་ ག་བུར་གང་བཙན་ བསྟན་མ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ འདའི་བཞི་བདག

7

མ་བདུད་ལྷམ་འདྲལ་ སྲི་འདིར་བཙན་གསུང་མ་ཧེ་ཀ་ཛ་སྲི་བརྩེས་བསྲུང[11]་མ་མོ་རྒྱུད་རྣམས་དང་ བར་ཧེ་བཞི་བདག་བདུད་བཙན་ཆེན་པོ་དཔའ་བོ་ཧཱུྃ་རི་ ལྷ་དམག་ བཙན་དམག་ བདུད་དམག་ ཀླུ་དམག་

8

ཀྱི་འབུམ་ཀྱི་བསྐོར་བའི་མཆོགས་དང་བཅས་པ་རྣམས་ཡང་སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་མ་ཡེང[12]་པར་དྲག་པོའི་སྐུར་བཞེངས་སྟེ་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ གུ་རུའི་སྦས་ལྗོངས་འདིར་རྫོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི[13]་ལུང་འཛིན་པའི་འགྲུབས[14]་སྟེ་སང་སྔགས་རྡོ་རྗེ་ལྡན་འཕྲག

9

ཐུང་lacuna ལྗོན་ཤིང་འབྲག་རི་སྤུང་ཤོང་ལ་ནས[15]་བདུད་རྩན[16]་ཀླུ་གསུམ་ ཐེག་ཆོག་ཡང་རྩེ་ པདྨ་ཡང་རྩེ་ རབ་ལྡན་རྩེ་མོ་ འབྲུག་དཀར་བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྤྱིངས་ལ་སོགས་པའི་གཏེར་བདག་དམ་ཆེན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་མཆོགས་དང་

10

བཅས་པ་རྣམས་ཡང་མི་སྟོའི་དབྱིངས་ནས་དྲག་པའི་སྐུར་བཞེངས་སྟེ་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ གུས་འཕྲུན་སྟེ་དྲག་གིས་བསྟན་པའི་ལྷ་དང་གསུང་མ་རྣམས་དང་ ཆ་འབང་བཀྱི་སྟེང་ཁ་པ་རྣམས་བཞི་དང་ འབར་སྤྱུངས་

11

ཡིད་དམ་འགྲོང་སྟེ་རྣམས་ནས་དང་ གཙོང་རིགས་མོན་པ་བཅས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པའི་རང་བྱུང་འགོ་བའི་ལྷ་དང་གསུང་མ་རྣམས་དང་ཐུགས་མ་ཡེང[17]་པར་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ ད་ཆ་མི་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོའི་བཀའ་དོན་བཞིན་ཕྲན་

10 Recte: *g.yeng*
11 Recte: *chos srung*
12 Recte: *g.yeng*
13 Recte: *Rdzogs pa chen po*
14 Recte: *sgrub*
15 Recte: *Gnas kyi*
16 Recte: *btsan*
17 Recte: *g.yeng*

12

བློན་སྡེ་དྲག[18]་གི་ལྷོ་མོན་གཙོང་འདོད་པ་གཅིག་འགྲིལ་ཀྱི་འཕྲུན་ནས་ལྷོ་མོན་གཙོང་གྱིར་གཞུང་མེད་པར་དག་བསྐྱོད་དང་ལན་ཕྱེད་རྒྱུའི་སྦྲ་ཐེའུ་ལན་པའི་སྙིང་པོ་ལགས་[19]   སྤྱོན་མོན་དམག་སྐབས་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་

13

རིགས་འགོངས་དུ་ཕུད་པ་ཡིན་ཅིང་སེམས་ངེས་བྱེད་   ད་ཆ་རྒྱ་ཡོས་ལོ་ནས་གཟུང་སྟེ་   མི་རྗེ་མཆོས་ཡོན་ཡབ་སྲས་ལྷུན་ཀྱི་བཀའ་དོན་བཞིན་   (བཅེ་བུད་དང་ལན་···འཇུ་བ་དང་   འབྲས་ལྗོང་འདིར་ལ་མཐའ་དངོན་འབྱུད་སླད་ཤར་ཚེ་)[20]   གུས་འཕྲུན་བློན་དག་ཤར་ཀྱི་མཚན་   ལྷོ་རིགས་མཚན་

14

བལྟད་དང་   ལྷོ་མོན་གཙོང་བཅས་དགྱིར[21]་གཞུང་མེད་པ་རྣམས་འདོད་པ་lacuna[22]འགྲིལ[23]་ཀྱི་གྲ་ལ་མཆོན་ཁ་གཅིག་པ་   རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ལ་འབྱོར།   ཁ་གཅིག་པ་བཅས་ཕྱི་ཁ་ནང་སྐྱུལ་བྱེད་ན་ལས་   རྗེ་མེད་ཀྱི་འབྲ་[24]

15

དོན་ལ་མ་གནས་པར་ནང་ཁ་ཕྱི་སྐྱུལ་ཀྱི་ཕུང་འབྱོར་བྱེད་ནས་བསྟན་པའི་བཀུག་ཤིང་སོགས་ལྷོ་མོན་གཙོང་བཅས་དགེར་གཞུང་མེད་པ་སུ་ཐད་ནས་བྱེད་པ་ཤར་ཚེ་[25]lacuna   ···དངོས་གི་ལྷ་གསུང་རྣམས་ཀྱི[26]་ལྡན་འཛུན[27]་གཟིགས་

16

ནས་འབྲུག་པོའི་སྐྱུར[28]་བཞེང་སྟེ་   རྡུཾ་པཏ་ཀྱི་འབྲ་འགྲོག་སྟེ་གཟིགས་ཤིང་ཤ་འཁྲུག་སྙིངས[29]་ལ་སོགས་པ་རྣམས་ལོ་དང་ཟླ་བ་བཞག་དང་ཟབ་མ་འགྱུངས་པར་སྨྱོ[30]་འཕོག་ལ་སོགས་པ་སྡོང་ནས་ཞལ་ཀྱི་

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[18] Possibly *sde pa dag*

[19] This part of the line is slightly confusing. Though it conveys the meaning that the various ministers and leaders of the three communities have agreed to abide by a single form of government and not pursue separate interests.

[20] This passage in brackets is unclear.

[21] Recte: *gyer*

[22] This section is indecipherable. May possibly read as ’dod pa gcig.

[23] Recte: *gcig sgril*

[24] Recte: *dgra*

[25] It is unclear what *shar tshe* means.

[26] Recte: *kyis*

[27] Recte: *’dzin*

[28] Recte: *drag po’i skur*

[29] Recte: *sha khrag snying*

[30] Recte: *smyon*

17

བཞེས་པ་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ་ལོ་ཁ་རམ་ཁ་ཡི་   དེ་མིན་སྔ་ཡིག་འདི་ལ་ཆ་གནས་བཅས་ལྷོ་མོན་གཙོང་བཅས་དགེར་གཞུང་མེད་པ་ནས་ འགོངས་གི་ལྷ་གསུང་རྣམས་སྤྱི་བོར་འཁྱུར་ནས་འགོངས་པའི་

18

བཀའ་བཞིན་   འཕྲད་གློན་···lacuna··ནས་ངག་བསྐྱོད་དང་ལན་ཐོག་   མི་རྗེ་མཆོས་ཡོན[31]·ཡབ་སྲས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་དོན་ལ་བསམ་ པ་ཕྱིར་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱི་དམག་ལག་འབྱུང་གསུམ་གང་ལ་འགྲོ་འགོས་ཀྱང་   ཁ་

19

ཞེས་མེད་པར་འདོད་པ་གཅིག་འགྲིལ་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པའི་ཞབས་འདེགས་འགྲུབ་པ་བྱུང་ཆེ་   འགོངས་གི་ལྷ་སྲུང་རྣམས་ཀྱི་གཟིགས་ནས་ཆེ་ དང་བསོས་ནམས[32]·དཔལ་དང་འབྱོར་པ་རྣམས་ཟླ་བ་ཡར་ངོ་ལྟར་བརྒྱས་པར་མཛད་

20

དུ་གསོལ་ལོ་   ལྷག་པར་སྔ་ཡིག་འདི་ལ་ཆ་གནས[33]·བྱུང་ན་འདི་ལྟར་དང་   རྩི་མེད་ཀྱི་སྔ་ཡིག་ལ་ཆ་གནས[34]·ལྷོ་མོན་གཙོང་དགེར་ གཞུང་མེད་པ་སུ་ཐད་ནས་བྱེད་པ་ཤར་ཆེ་ཐ་གསེར་སྲང་གསུམ་

21

ཞ་ཕྲུག་མེད་པར[35]·འཁྲིམ་ཞབས་སུ་འབུལ་འགྲུབས[36]·ཐོག་སུ་ལྟས་འདི་   བཞིན་ཆད་པ་ཕྱི་བ་སྤྱོག་དང་   རྒྱུང་བ་ལུས་ཐོག་དུ་སྤྱོང་ བར་དོན་མི་ཟ་ཤིང་སོ་སོའི་ཡིད་ལ་ངེས་པ་ཕྱེད་   དེ་ཐོག་དུ་རྟགས་ཕུལ་བ་

[31] Recte: *mchod yon*
[32] Recte: *bsod nams*
[33] Recte: *chag nas*
[34] Recte: *chags nas*
[35] Recte: *zha chag*. This has the meaning of *nyams chag* which implies a violation of some kind.
[36] Recte: *sgrub*

22

འབྲས་ལྗོངས་བློན་གྲྭ་ཤར་ཀྱི་རྟགས་ Seal བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྡིང་ཁ་པ་གྲོན་བདེ་ཆེན་རྣམས་རྒྱལ[37]་ཀྱི་འཁྲིད་གཙང་བསྐོར[38]་ལག་བསྐོར[39]་བའི་རྟགས Seal འབར་སྤྱུང་གྲོན་མི་ཐར་འཐིང་འཁྲིད་ལག་བསྐོར་ཀྱི་རྟགས Seal གྲོན་རྡོ་ལེག་ཀྱི་རྟགས

23

ལིང་དམ་པ་གྲོན་བསྟན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྟགས་ གྲོན་མི་ཆོས་འགྲུབ་གི་རྟགས་ Seal འབྲང་སྟོད་པ་གྲོན་འགྱུ་རྟུའི་རྟགས་ བོད་འགྲོང་པ་གྲོན་སྟག་པོའི་རྟགས་ གཙོང་ཤུ་སྤྲུ་རྣམས་འབང་ཤ་ཏི་རྟགས Seal གཙོང་འཕྱུག་ཤུགས་

24

ཀྱི་རྟགས Seal མོ་ནང་གི་རྟགས Seal བཙ་ལྷུས་ཀྱི་རྟགས Seal ༼སེག་བཙེ་པའི་རྟགས་༽སྦོ་གིང་གིས་རྟགས Seal མ་བཙི་རྟ་ཀྱི་རྟགས་ ལ་འབྱུང་གི་རྟགས Seal ༼སྦུ་ཕ་ཀུ་འདེས་རྟགས Seal ༽ཆེ་ཤེ་ནང་གི་རྟགས Seal མིག་ཡམ་ཀྱི་རྟགས Seal ༼ཨ་ཛམ་རྟ་ཀྱིས་རྟགས Seal ༽མོ་ལྷུན་པའི་རྟགས་ པད་ཁ་པའི་

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རྟགས Seal འབོ་ལོ་འབིར་ཀྱི་རྟགས་ ར་ཐོང་རྒྱ་འགྱུང་པ་རྟ་ས་ཨ་རྐོད་ཀྱི་རྟགས Seal རིང་འབིགས་རྒྱང་འབད་པ་རྟ་ས་ཤུ་ཕང་གི་རྟགས Seal ག་ལད་རྒྱང་འགྱུགས་པ་རྟ་ས་མགོན་སྦྲ་བུས་ཀྱི་རྟགས Seal པད་ལོ་

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ཀྱི་རྟགས Seal ཞེས་རྒྱུ་ཡོས་ཟླ་ཚེས་ལ་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་ཕྱུན་མཚོགས[40]་ཁང་གསར་དུ་འགྲིགས།[41]

[37] Recte: *Rnam rgyal*

[38] It is unclear what *gtsang bskor* means, though it could be a misspelling for *tshang skor*, meaning something like "complete surrounding" in the sense of a geographical region or could mean something like "surrounding households" again indicating a region or village.

[39] This could possibly refer to the act of physically imprinting the seal with the hand and thus be a misspelling for *lag skor*. There is also a Sikkimese word *lhag*[*s*] [*b*] skor *pa* which means some kind of land official.

[40] *Recte: tshogs*

[41] *'grigs* could also be read as arranged, or brought together in the sense of compiled as such it could be possible to read this verb more simply as *made*.

APPENDIX EIGHT

THE MON PA'I THO BYANG

What follows is more an interpretation of the text rather than a translation, given the lack of grammatical markers and verbs. This document starts on the twelfth page of the combined *LSG* and *MTB* manuscript.

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༄ མ་ཆེན་བྱམས་པའི་འོག་ཏུ་ཡོག་བསམ་མོན་པའི་མཐོ་བྱང་ཡིན། ཐོག་མར་རྟ་ས་ཡོངས་ཧང་གྱིས་རྒྱུད། ཨ་ཡུས་ལ་བུ་ཆེ་བ་ཀུ་སངས་ རྒྱ་འདུས་ རྩམ་སྤོར་ པ་ལི་ཤིང་དགོན་ དཔོན་སློབ་ བུ་མོ་ཤངས་མོ་ ན་ཀོན་ ཨ་མ་ཙོང་སྐྱིད་ རྟ་ས་སང་ཀུའི་ བུ་དང་གྲག་ ཨ་བཙན་ བུ་རྒན་པ་དོམ་པོ་(བུ་༢) སྨིག་ལངས་(བུ་༡) བསང་ཕྲང་ རམ་འཕེང་ བསང་བསོས་ ཀ་གཅོད་ བུ་སྟག་གཟབ་(བུ་ཆུང་བ་ཏག་ཤིས) བོན་པོ་རང་ཤངས་རྒྱུད་ བུ་ཨ་ཚེངས་ བུ་བུ་མོ་གསུམ་ ཨ་ཅུང་ ཨ་མ་ན་འདིན་ དར་ནང་བུ་ས་སྡུ་ བུ་བུ་མོ་གཉིས་ ཨ་ཁྲིན་ ཆེ་བ་ཤོ་ཡིག་ རྣམས་འཛོམ་ དང་ཤིང་གནམ་གང་ནང་ཚང་ བུ་མོ་བསོ་ནམས་ ཨ་འདེངས་ བུ་སང་ནུམས་ ཨ་ཕུན་ ན་མོར་ བུ་མོ་ཨ་ཤིང་ བུ་ཁམ་པ་ཚེང་ སང་ཏོད་རྒྱུད་ བུ་མོ་ནང་འཕེགས་ བསྡོམ་(༡༢) ༄ རྟ་ས་སང་འབེན་གྱི་རྒྱུད་ ཚེ་རིང་ བུ་སྐུ་ནུམས་ སོ་སྐྱོགས་ བསང་ནུང་ བུ་ཨ་མང་ བུ་མོ་རྟ་གླིབས་ དང་འདིང་རྒྱུད་ནས་བུ་སང་གོན་

A List of Yog bsam Mon pa under the jurisdiction of Ma chen Byams pa. Firstly the clan of Rta sa yong hang. A yus' eldest son is Ku sang, [followed by] Rgya 'dus, Rtsam spor, Pa li shing dgon, Dpon slob. His daughters are Shangs mo, Na kon, and their mother is tsong skyid. The sons of Rta sa sang ku are Dang grag and A btsan, the elder son Dom po has two sons, [one of which is] Mig langs who has one son [who is] Bsang phrang, [the other is] Ram 'pheng. Bsang bsos. Ka gcod. Bu stag gzab (whose younger son is Stag shis).

The clan of the Bon po rang shangs: The son A tshengs [has] three children, A chung,[1] A ma na 'din, and Dar nang whose son Sa sdu

[1] This could be Am chung, which is a Sikkimese term either for a secondary wife or the younger sister of the mother (who is unmarried and lives in the same household).

[has] two children: A khyen and the elder Sho yig. Rnams 'jom and the entire household of Shing gnam gang: The daughter Bso nams, A 'dengs, whose sons are Sang nums, A pun, Na mor, and the daughter A shing [whose son is] Kham pa Tshing.

The clan of Sang rgod: The daughter Nang 'pigs. Altogether this makes 43[people].

The clan of Ta sa sang 'ben:[2] Tse ring's son is Sku nums, So skyogs, Bsang nung, Bu A mang, and the daughter Rta klobs.

From the clan of Dang 'ding, The son Sang gon [whose son is]...

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༄༅། བུ་ཐུབ་ལེགས་ བུ་གཉིས་བུ་མོ་ཅིག་ ཀན་འཛོམས་ སང་འགང་ བུ་རྒན་པ་ག་ཅོད་བུ་ཨ་འདེངས་ སང་དགུའི་ བུ་ཆུགས་ཅིག་ སང་འཐག་ ཤམ་འབོང་ རང་ཧཱུྃ་བུ་སང་སྡོང་ ཛ་མ་བུ་དང་བཙོས་བུ་སེ་ཐོས་ ན་འདིན་ ཕོ་བཟང་ ནང་ཚང་བུ་ཅིག་བུ་མོ་ཅིག་ ནང་འཐག་ ཆོང་ཕྲལ་མནགས་མནགས་མོ་ནང་མོན་པུ་ ནམ་གོན་བུ་མོ་ཀུ་ནམས་ ནམས་ཤིག་ལ་བུ་མོ་༼༣༽ ན་མུ་བུ་མོ་སྐྱིད་ནམས་སྟག་སྣལ་ ལས་བྱེད་མོན་པ་བསེན་སྒྲོམ་ ན་འདུ་༼༢༽ མི་ནོ་བུ་མོ་གསུམ་ ནམ་ཙམ་བུ་མོ་ནམ་ཕོགས་བུ་མོ་༼༣༽ ནང་ཤོན་ འབྲིན་ནོ་ བུ་མོ་ཨ་གིང་ འདི་རྣམས་སོང་ བཅོམས་ ༼༤༨༽

༈ ཡོངས་ཡིམ་གྱི་འོག་ཆོང་སྐྱིལ་མོན་པའི་མཐོ་བྱང་ཡིན་ནོ་ ༈ རྟ་ས་ར་འགྲིས་བུ་རྒན་པ་འཛུ་ཉོག་ བུ་ཤང་སྨུག་བུ་ཤོག་ཡིག་ བུ་བསྟན་རྒྱས་ དེ་འོག་རམ་བཞུན་ལ་བུ་༼༢༽ ཤོ་ལམ་ཕ་བུ་༼༤༽ ནམ་དབྱིད་བུ་མོ་༼༢༽ ཀུ་ཡོངས་ བུ་ཨན་རྫོར་ དང་འདེངས་

...Thub legs [who has] two sons and one daughter. Kan 'dzoms, Sang 'gang, The eldest son is Ga cod and [his] son is A 'dengs. Sangs dgu's sons are Chugs cig, Sang 'thag and Sham 'bong. Rang Hum's son is Sang sdong. Ja ma bu's son and adoptive son are Se thos and Na 'din, Pho bzang. Nang tshang has one son and one daughter. Nang 'thag, Chong phral, Mnags mnags mo[3] nang mon pu. Nam gon's daughter is Ku nams, Nams shig has three daughters. Na mu's daughter is Skyid nams stag snal.

The mon pa official Bsen sgrom, Na 'du, Mi no who has three daughters, The daughter of Nam tsam, Nam phogs has three daugh-

[2] Sang 'ben refers to the places of Sang mo and 'Ben below Ravang la.

[3] This term has been encountered in chapter 2. It is unclear what this term may mean, though it is likely a genealogical term, possibly an unmarried woman who has children.

ters. Nang shon, 'Byin no's daughter is A ging. All these in total come to 46.

This is the official register of the Mon pa that conducts trade, who fall under Yongs Lim. Rta sa ra 'gyis oldest son is 'Ju nyog, whose son is Shang spag and whose son is Shog yig, his son is Bstan rgyas. Under that Ram bshun has two sons, Sho lam father and son are five. Nam dbyid has two daughters, Ku yongs, her son An jor. Dang 'dengs

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ལ་བུ་ཀྲན་པ་ ཨ་ཏན་བུ་སང་འགོར་ ཨ་ཁྱུང་ལ་བུ་༼༡༽ ཨ་ཁྱུང་བུ་གཟའ་ཏུ་རབ་རྒྱས་ ཡང་ཨ་ཁྱུང་བུ་དོ་ཨོལ་ དོང་
ཨོལ་བུ་ཧྲིལ་རྟ་བུ་༼༢༽ དང་ཀྲག་ལ་བུ་༼༢༽ ཆེ་བ་བུ་ཙུང་ ཆུང་བ་སྟག་འབྲམ་ སྐྱེ་མན་མནགས་མོ་མ་བུ་༼༤༽
ཨ་ཁྱིས་ མནགས་མོ་ན་ཤངས་ བུ་མོ་ན་དབྱེས་ ག་ཞིག་རྒྱུ་ བུ་ཀྲན་པ་སང་ཅིམ་ བུ་༼༡༽ ཤོ་སྡིད་ དར་སྡོང་
བུ་དར་ཅམ་ མོན་མདོང་རྒྱུད་ ཚ་བོ་གཉིས་ སྐུ་གཞིམ་ལ་བུ་༼༡༽ གུ་ཏོག་བུ་ལྔ་ མནགས་མོ་ནམ་རྡོལ་སྤུན་
༼༢༽ མནགས་མོ་ན་ བུ་མ་ལེགས་ གུ་ཅོག་བུ་༼༡༽ ཡང་བུ་༼༡༽གུ་འདིས་ བུ་ཆེ་བ་ག་ཟེར་༼ག༽ སྤུ་སྡིས་
སྤག་བཞག་བུ་༼༡༽ ཀང་ལ་བུ་མོ་༼༡༽ འདར་ཡང་ཕ་ཚབ་བུ་༼༡ སང་འབོན་༽ མནགས་མོ་ནང་འབབས་
མནགས་མོ་ན་ཀོས་ལ་བུ་མོ་༼༣༽ མནགས་མོ་ནང་མིལ་ ནང་གཞན་ མནགས་མོ་ན་སློབས་བུ་མོ་ནང་རྫོན་ཀིང་གེ་སར་
རྒྱལ་པོ་ བང་སང་ནུ་འོ་ བང་ཐོང་ལ་བུ་༼༡༽ མནགས་མོ་ན་ལ་ངལ་བུ་དར་མིལ་ཕ་བུ[4] ན་མད་སྤུན་༼༢༽ ནམ་
སྤྲབ་ལ་

Has an elder son A tan [whose son is] Sang 'gor. A khyung has a son, another of A khyung's sons is Gza [should read ru] Rab rgyas. In addition A khyung's son is Do ol. Do ol's son, Hri rta has two sons. Dang krag has two sons, The oldest is Bu cung and the younger is Stag 'bram. Skye man mnags mo has four sons. A khyis, Mnags mo na shang's daughter is Na dbyes.

The clan of Ga zhig: The eldest son is Sang cim and he has one son. Sho sdid, Dar sdong, the son Dar cam. The clan of Mon mdong has two grandsons, Sku gzhim has one son, Gu tog has five sons, Mnags mo nam rdol has two siblings, Mnags mo na's son is Ma Legs. Gu cog has one son, who also has one son called Gu 'dis. The oldest son is Ga gzer, Spu sdis, Spag bzhag has one son. Kang has one daughter. The step father 'Dar yang has one son called Sang 'bon. Mnags mo nang 'babs and Mnags mo na kos have three daughters, Mnags mo nang mil,

[4] This entry is unclear.

Nang gshan, mnags mo na slebs has a daughter called Nang rdo na king ge sar rgyal po. Bang sang nu 'o, bang thong has one son. Mnags mo na is pregnant. dar mil father and son. Na mad has two siblings. Nam sprab…

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བུ་མོ་ནམ་སྤམ་བུ་མོ་༼༡༽ ནམ་པད་མ་བུ་༼༤༽ མནགས་མོ་ནམ་ཕེང་བུ་མོ་༼༡༽ མནགས་མོ་ནམ་ཏིའི་བུ་རྟམ་མགྲིན་བུ་ཤོ་ངག་ རྟེན་འདུས་བུ་ཨ་དྲུག་ ན་མད་༼༡༽ མནགས་མོ་ན་བསེམས་སམ་བུ་མོ་༼༧༽ རྟ་ས་ཏ་གླེབས་རྒྱུད་༼༥༽གྱིས་བུ་ག་ལྷུས་ནང་ཚང་བུ་༼༢༽བུ་མོ་༼༣༽ དེ་འོག་ག་ཅོར་ བསམ་རྡོ་བུ་༼༡༽གནམ་གང་ ༈ དབྱངས་རྒྱས་བུ་མེད་ཚབ་བུ་མོ་༼༣༽གསུམ་མཆོག་མེ་འབྲུག་ཟླ་༼༩༽ཚེས་༼༢༥༽ལ་བྱུང་མཐོ[5] གཡང་རྒྱས་བུ་མོ་ནམ་སྤལ་ མནགས་མོ་ན་ཤོགས་བུ་མོ་ནང་མོ་ཡང་༼༡༽ ག་ཐར་ནང་ཚང་ལ་བུ་༼༣༽ རང་ཅོན་ དང་སྤུམ་ལ་བུ་༼༢༽ ཨ་དྲུང་ མནགས་མོ་ན་ཐེང་ལ་བུ་མོ་ན་ཧུས་བུ་མོ་༼༢༽ ཡང་ཅིག་མིང་ བུ་ཅང་ཤིང་ སང་ཏོང་ ཆུང་བུ་༼༡༽ མནགས་མོ་ནམ་ཏིའི་རྒྱུད་བུ་རྟམ་མགྲིན་ཕ་བུ་༼༢༽ ནང་ཡན་བུ་མོ་༼༢༽ མནགས་མོ་རྒྱལ་མོ་ལ་བུ་མོ་ན་འབིང་བུ་མོ་༼༡༽ ཚང་ལྡན་འཛོམ་པོ་ ན་གམ་ལ་བུ་མོ་ན་འབིང་བུ་མོ་ན་ཉམས་ ནམ་འདོགས་བུ་མོ་ ན་ལེགས་བུ་མོ་༼༢༽ན་མད་ ན་ཉམས་ ཡིང་ནོ་མ་བུ་༼༢༽

Has a daughter Nam spam, who also has a daughter. Nam Pad ma has four sons. Mnags mo nam phengs has one daughter. Mnags mo nam Ti's son Rtam mgrin has one son Sho ngag. Rten 'dus's son is A drug. Na mad has one daughter. Mnags mo na bsems sam has seven daughters. Ga lhus, who is a son from the clan of Rta sa ta klebs, his family has two son and three daughters. Under that is Ga cor. Bsam rdo has one son called Gnam gang (New moon).

Dbyangs rgyas had no daughters so adopted three girls on the 25 day of the ninth month of the Fire Dragon year, so it is recorded. G.yang rgyas (sic) daughter Nam spal. Mnags mo na shogs has a daughter Nang mo who also has a [daughter].

In the house hold of Ga thar there are three sons, Rang con, Dang spum, who has two sons, and A drung. Mnags mo na theng has a daughter Na hus, who also has two daughters. Yang cig ming's son is Cung shing, Sang tong has one small child.

The son Rtam mgrin, from the clan of Mnags mo nam ti, father and son are two. Nang yan has two daughters. Mnags mo rgyal mo

[5] *Recte*: Tho

has a daughter Na ’bing, who also has one daughter called Tshang ldan ’dzom po. Na gam has a daughter Na ’bing, whose daughter is Na nyams. Nam ’dogs has a daughter, Na legs has two daughters, Na mad and Na nyams. Ling no ma has two sons.

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མནགས་མོ་ནོ་འབོབ་བུ་གུ་རེངས་ ན་འདིས་རྣམས་དང་ ༼སྡོམ་༡༠༩༽ ༄ རྟ་ས་མ་བྱིངས་རྒྱུད་བུ་ཨ་རྒྱས་ནང་ཚད་གཟའ་མི་བུ་ཅང་ཤེས་ སིག་མེད་ ༼སྤ་ལོག༽ ནུ་བོ་ ༼ཨ་ཨོན༽ རིགས་སྐྱེན་[6] བུ་མོ་ན་ ༼དེ་ག་ཀྲིད༽ བཞོམ་གཞུང་གི་ ༼བུ་མོ་རང་བསོན༽ བུ་ཚབ་ཕུལ་ རྟ་ས་ག་ཡག་སྐྱེ་མན་ཡིན་ རང་བསམ་བུ་མོ་ ༼༢༽ སྤ་ཏོལ་ ཨ་ཏིད་ བསང་བཟན་བུ་མོ་ ༼༤༽ ཨ་ཉན་བུ་མོ་ ༼༢༽ མིང་ ༼ནམ་རིབ༽ ༼སང་ནོ༽ ད་བན་རྒྱུད་བུ་གུ་ནུམ་ན་འདེངས་གཟའ་ཚངས་ ༄ མ་དབྱིངས་བུ་མོ་ཆེ་བ་ནང་འགྱོང་ནང་བཤོག་བུ་ ༼༡༽ ཆུང་བ་ན་བཤིད་བུ་སི་མིག་ལ་བུ་མོ་བུ་མོ་ནང་ཐོག་ནང་ཡན་ཡང་བུ་ ༼༡༽ བུ་མོ་ ༼༡༽ ཅོང་འདོད་ཡང་བུ་ ༼༡༽ རང་ཕེན་ལ་བུ་སུ་ དར་དབྱིད་ལ་བུ་བུ་མོ་ ༼༡༽ བུ་ཡར་འབུང་ ཨ་རྒྱན་བུ་ ༼༡༽ ས་ཨུ་རྒྱུད་ ན་མོངས་ལ་བུ་མོ་ ༼༤༽ བུ་དར་མོངས་སྐྱེ་སྣན་ནང་འབོན་བུ་ ༼༡༽ བུ་མོ་ ༼༡༽ ཚེ་རིང་སྐྱིད་བུ་མོན་དབྱེར་ སྟག་བོ་བུ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ ནམ་འབང་ སྐྱི་ཐང་བུད་འགྱོད་ རམ་འབིང་ ཨ་ལུན་བུ་ག་འདེན་ཡང་ ༼༡༽ ནམ་བུ་ཁྲིད་ཅོང་མེད་

Mngags mo no ’bob’s son is Gu rengs, including all of this is 109 [people] in total. In the son A rgyas’ family, from the clan Rta sa ma byings, has one son called Cang shes.

The castes of Sig med, Spa log, nu bo and A an are low-castes. The woman De ga krid [offspring is] Bshom shung whose daughter is Rang bson and who received an adopted son because Rta sa ga yag was without children. Rang bsam has two daughters, Spa tol, A tid, Bsang bzan and four girls. A nyan has two daughters called Nam rib and Sang no.

The son Gu num na ’dengs, who is from the Da ban clan. Ma dbyings’ oldest daughter, Nang ’gyong, Nang bshog has one daughter. The youngest daughter had a son Bshid bu who in Si mig had a daughter called Nang thog Nang yan, who also has one son and one daughter. Cong ’dod also has a son, Rang phen has [three] sons. Dar dbyid has one son and one daughter, the son is called Yar ’bung and A rgyan.

[6] This may be an error for *rigs ngan*.

The clan of Sa U. Na mongs has four daughters, The son Dar mongs and his wife (*skye sman*) Nang 'bon had one son and one daughter. The daughter of Tshe ring skyid has a daughter called Na dbyer. Stag bo's daughters are Lha mo and Nam 'bang. Sgye thang's son is Da 'grod, Ram bing. A lun's son Ga 'don also has one son. Nam bu 'khrid and Chong med.

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༄༅། ཉོངས་གི་རྒྱུད་ཨ་འདམ་སྐྱེ་མན་ནམ་བ་ཞོལ་ བུ་མོ་ནང་ཡུའི་༼༡༽ཡང་༼༢༽ འགོ་ལོགས་ སྟག་དམོར་བུ་༼བུ་གསུམ་༽ཨ་ཤིས་ དོན་གྲུབ་བུ་མོ་ན་སྐྱེད་ ཨ་བཙན་ལ་བུ་༼༡༽ བསན་ཐིམ་ ཚེ་རིང་ བུ་གདའ་འཇུ་ རང་ཧུ་མནགས་མོ་ནམ་འབེག་ལ་༼བུ་མོ་ཛ་ཏིས་༽ན་རིས་བུ་མོ་༼༣༽ མནགས་མོ་ཆུང་བ་བསོ་ནགས་ན་མ་བུ་༼༣༽ ནམ་ཚར་ལ་བུ་མོ་ནམ་ཕེག་ ནང་འདིན་བུ་མོ་༼༢༽ རང་གཞིལ་ བུ་མོ་ན་ཉིང་ ནམ་བཟང་བུ་མོ་ན་སྒོམས་" བུ་མོ་༼༡༽ཆུང་བ་ན་མིང་ སྙགས་རྒོད་བཏང་འཛོ་རྒྱུད་ཞོ་འབབས་ བུ་དོན་གྲུབ་ཆིང་སྐྱེ་སྨན་ནོ་འཛོམས་བུ་མོ་པད་འཛོམས་ བུ་ཨང་དགའ་ སྐུ་རབ་སྟག་འབྲམ་སྡག་སོགས་ པ་ཏིས་ ཨ་ལྟོས་ལ་བུ་མོ་ནམ་ཙོར་མ་བུ་༼༢༽ དཀོན་ཚེ་རིང་ནང་ཚུང་ལ་༼བུ་ ༢ བུ་མོ་ ༡༽ལ་ག་ཟག་བུ་ཤོ་སྤོར་ བུ་མོ་ན་འདང་མ་བུ་༼༢༽ཆུང་བ་༼༡༽ ན་གཟུམ་བུ་མོ་ནང་དབུལ་མ་བུ་༼༢༽ རྣ་མོ་ནམ་འཐད་ལ་བུ་མོ་ནང་འགྱོང་མ་བུ་༼༢༽ བན་གཞུས་མིད་ ནང་བཞིག་ན་ལེན་

From the Nyongs clan are A 'dam, skye man and Nam ba zhol. The girl Nang yu has one son and two daughters. 'Go logs, Stag dmor's son (who has three children) A shis, Do grub and the daughter Na skyed. A btsan has one son. Bsan thim, Tshe ring, The son gdad 'ju, Rang Hu. Mnags mo nam 'beg has a daughter called Sna tis, who also has three daughters. The younger Mnags mo, called bso nags has three sons. Nam tshar has a daughter called Nam pheg. Nang 'din has two daughters Rang gzhil and Bu mo na nying. Nam bzang's daughter is Na sgoms. Chung ba na ming [or the youngest is called].

The Snyags rgod btang are dairy producers and curd taxpayers [i.e. pay taxes in curds and dairy produce]. The son Don grub ching [sic. Tshe ring] and his wife No 'dzoms have a daughter named Pad 'dzoms. The son Ang dga', Sku rab, Stag 'bram sdag sogs, Pa tis, The daughter of A ltos, Nam tsor ma, has two sons. The household of Dkog Tshe ring has two sons and one daughter to which Ga zag's son is Sho spor. To the girl Na 'dang ma has two sons, the youngest of which has one son. Na gzum's daughter, Nang dbul ma, has two sons, Rna mo nam 'thad's daughter Nang 'gyong ma has two sons, Ban gzhus mid and Nang bzhig. Na len has…

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མ་བུ་༼༩༽ ཨ་ཉན་མ་བུ་༼༩༽ ན་ནོང་རྒྱུད་ནམ་ཕག་བུ་མོ་ན་མད་ ཆོས་སྐྱིད་ ནང་འགྱིམ་བུ་མོ་ན་ཞུས་ ༈ དུས་དེ་སྐབས་ཐོག་མནགས་མོ་ནང་ཨི་ མ་དབྱིངས་སྐབས་ནང་ཨི་བུ་མོ་ན་རིས་ཁྲིགས་པ་ལེན་ སྒྱེས་ཡུག་སྐབས་ན་རིས་བུ་མོ་ནང་བསན་ཕྲལ་ཐོབ་ཡིན་ ན་སྐམ་ ན་ལིང་ ན་ཤིམ་བུ་མོ་ན་མེ་གི་བུ་མོ་ཀ་མོ་ ན་སྐྱེད་བུ་༼༡༽ འདི་རྣམས་སོ་ བསིན་ལྟམ་དུ་ཡང་བསམ་འགྲུབ་ཨ་བཟབ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཚོང་ ཨ་རྒྱམ་ སྡོམ་༼༡༠༧༽ ཤིང་བྱ་ཟླ་༼༡༢༽[7] ཚེས་ལ་ས་......ཆེན་ནས་ཞིབས་བཅད་གནང་བའི་ ༈ ཨ་འདིངས་འོག་ལས་བྱེད་མོན་པའི་ཐོ་བྱུང་ཡིན། ༈ རྟ་ས་རང་བཞིང་གི་རྒྱུད་བུ་ཨ་ཚིང་བུ་ཨ་ཁོས་[8] ༼༢༽ རང་འཇོམས་བུ་བང་གཞིམ་བུ་༼༡༽ ཨ་དགོན་བུ་འདུ་སངས་ ངོར་གཞོང་བུ་ བསང་ཅུང་སྤུན་༼༢༽ ཏི་རི་འགྱེང་གི་རྒྱུད་ ༈ བུ་རྒན་པ་སང་མན་བུ་ཚབ་ལས་བྱེད་མནགས་མོ་ཨུ་རྒྱན་སྐྱིད་མེ་འབྲུག་ཟླ་༼༩༽ཚེས་༼༢༢༽ལ་བྱུང་མཐོ་ རྣ་མོ་ན་ཧི་བུ་མོ་ནོ་

…nine sons. A nyan ma has nine sons. From the Na nong clan, the girl Nam phag daughter is Na mad. Chos skyid requested the daughter of Nang 'gyim. At that time Mnags mo nang I did not agree and so the daughter of Nang I, called, Na ris Khrigs pa was taken instead. At the time of being widowed [sgyes yug], Na ris got the daughter called Nang bsan phral. Na skam, Na ling, Na shim's daughter is Na me, whose daughter is Ka mo. Na skyed has one son. This is all. In Bsin ltam also Bsam 'grub and A bzab did trade. Including A rgyam the total people are 107. And so on a day in the twelfth month of the wood bird year, the survey was completed by the leader [*lit.* great place].

The register of the Mon pa officials under the jurisdiction of A 'dings. The son of the clan of Rta sa rang bzhing is A tshing, who has two loving sons. Rang 'joms son, Bang gzhim, has one son. A dgon's son is 'Du sangs. Ngor gzhongs' son Bsang cung has two siblings. The clan of Ti ri 'gyeng. The oldest son Sang man's adopted child is the official Mnags mo U rgyan skyid and so it was recorded on the twenty second day of the ninth month of the Fire Dragon year. Rna mo na hi daughter

[7] 1645

[8] This is a Lho skad word meaning loving son.

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༄༅། ཐོ་རྣ་མོ་ནམ་ནང་ རང་ཆུགས་བུ་ཨ་ཧོམ་བུ་མོ་ཙུན་མ་ ཆུང་བུ་ བུ་མོ་ན་འདེངས་མ་བུ་༼༩༽ ཨ་འདམ་ནང་
ཚང་ལ་བུ་ཨ་འདུས་ བུ་མོ་ནམ་ཕེགས་ ཨན་འཇུ་ ནམས་ཕོགས་ ཨ་འདུང་ཕ་བུ་༼༥༽ དར་སྤམ་བུ་འབོ་ཀུགས་ དགེ་སློང་
ལིང་ཤིས་བུ་ ག་ཡོད་བུ་གཉིས ས་གུགས་ ཆུང་བ་༼༡༽སང་སྐྱེལ་ མིག་ནག་བུ་ བུ་མོ་ནང་ཙིས་ ཨ་གུགས་
ས་དབྱིམས་བུ་སྒྲུབ་སྡེ་ ར་སྐག་ག་དིན་༼༢༽ ཨ་ལིག་ཕ་བུ་༼༣༽ དར་བྱིད་མ་བུ་རྟ་ཙུམ་གུ་ ཨ་ནང་༼༢༽༼བུ་༡༽
དར་ལམ་བུ་མོ་༼༡༽ ནམ་དབྱམས་མ་བུ་༼༢༽རྣམས་འོ་ བུ་མོ་ཨུ་རྒྱན་སྐྱིད། བསྡོམས་༼༣༥༽

Tho rna mo nam nang. Rang chugs' son is A Hom, whose daughter is Tsun ma, Chung bu, the daughter Na 'dengs ma has nine sons. In the household of A 'dam there are the sons A 'dus, the daughter Nam phegs, An 'ju and Nams phogs. A 'dung including father are five, Dar spam (whose son is 'Bo kugs), Dge slong, Ling shis bu, Ga yod and Sa gugs. The youngest has one son, Sang skyel, mig nag bu, the daughter Nang tsis has two sons, and A gugs. Sa dbyims' son is Sgrub sde. Ra skag ga din has two children. A lig father and son are three. Dar byid ma's son is Rta tsum gu. A nang has two children and one boy. Dar lam has one daughter. Nam dbyams ma has two sons. Including the daughter U rgyan skyid in total thirty five people.

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༈ ཨ་དགོན་འོག་རྡོ་མོན་གྱི་མཐོ་བྱང་ཡིན་ནོ། ༈ རྟ་ས་རྔར་མིལ་གྱི་རྒྱུད་བུ་རྒན་པ་ཀུ་ལང་མ་བུ་ རམ་བཅོད་ས་གུགས་
མ་བུ་འགོ་མཐོན་ བཅའ་ནཱ་ལ་སྐྱེན་སླན་ནང་ཙང་བུ་ཤོ་འདྲང་ བུ་མོ་ནམ་རྩོམ་ ན་འགྱོས་ བུ་ཨ་རུབ་ ཨ་ཤིས་
རྡོ་མོན་རྟ་ས་ཨ་དཀར་འོག་མོན་སྡོང་ ཐན་ ཟམ་གཟའ་ ཨ་བསོས་ ཨན་དྲུང་ མ་ཏིས་བུ་ཨ་དཀར་ དར་དབྱུན་
ཆུང་བ་ཨ་ཆེན་ དར་འབྱུང་ནང་ཚངས་༼༥༽ བུ་མི་ཁྲི་ཟླ[9] ༼༡༽ཚེས་༼༡༠༽ཡི་ཉིན་ལ་འཁོར་པོ་ཨུ་རྒྱན་ལ་བུ་སང་
ལྷོས་བུ་མོ་ནང་ཡོན་༼༡༽ གནམ་ལྷུགས་ བསང་ཙུང་ རྟེན་ཚེ་རིང་ ཨ་ཕོངས་ལ་བུ་ཨ་ཙོང་ སང་འབང་ བསམ་
འཕེར་ལ་སྐྱེ་མན་ནང་ཐག་བུ་བསམ་འདེས་ བུ་མོ་ཤོ་ནམས་ ན་འབིམ་ རི་དྲུང་ ཨ་མོ་ལེགས་

This is the official register of the Rdo mon under the jurisdiction of A dgon. The eldest son from the clan of Rta sa rngar mil is Ku lad ma, whose son is Ram bcod pa. Gugs ma's son is 'Go mthon. Bca' nā has a wife called Nang cang and a son called Sho 'drang as well as two daughters, Nam rtsom and Na 'gyos. The son A rub's [son] is A shis.

[9] 1646

Under the jurisdiction of Rdo mon rta sa A dkar are a thousand mon. Than, Zam gza' A bsos, An drung. Ma tis' son is A dkar. Ddra byan's younger son in A chen. There are five members in the household of Dar 'byang. On the tenth day of the first month of the Fire Dog year it was registered. U rgyan has the son Sang ltos and the daughter Nang yon [who has one] gNam lcags, Bsang cung, Rten Tshe ring, A phongs son is A cong. Sang 'bang. bsam 'bir has no children Nang thag son is bsam 'dis, the daughter sho nams, Na 'bim, Ri dung, A mo legs.

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PD/1.2/001. 1663. *Lho mon tshong gsum Agreement*. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology). Representatives of the three communities agree to accept a single government under the leadership of Chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal.

PD/1.1/002. 1719. *Da lad tsong bha ra khel kyi lag khyer*. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology). This document issued by the Sikkimese government to one Bha ra Limbu, gives him the authority to carry out certain services for the government. 10 lines, cursive document badly damaged along the fold.

——. c.1720s. *Yug mthing A rub kyi yig cha*. Formally from the Royal Archives, currently missing.

PD/9.3/001. 1721 (possibly 1778 if the date is according to the Nepali system Vikram Samvat). Taxation register of Sikkimese lands in eastern Nepal. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/9.5/003. 1759. By Phyag mdzod Gar dbang. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology). This document is an account of the events he witnessed during his life, with a historical introduction on the origins of the Sikkimese Royal family. 168 lines.

PD/1.2/004 1770. From the Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology). An agreement signed by the Sikkimese public and the Chos rgyal regarding the defence of the western Sikkimese border from Nepalese attack.

PD/9.5/004. 1779(?). Royal order appointing Padma rig 'dzin as the tax collector of Morang. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/9.5/006. Late 1780s–early 1790s. Letter from Spa'o Amban to Yug phyogs thub. This letter requests the recipient to protect the Sikkim-Nepal border by sending the Sikkimese army to that region and invade Nepal should Nepal invade Tibet. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/6.1/003. c.1790s. Copy of the peace treaty following the Gorkha invasion of Sikkim, detailing the Sikkim-Nepal boundary. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/9.5/007. 1790. Land grant issued to Yug phyogs thub by Bhutanese government (Rin spungs rdzong) on account of his service during the Sino-Nepal War. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/9.5/005. 1791. Land grant issued by the Bhutanese government (Bkra shis chos kyi pho brang) to Yug phyogs thub for his service during the Sino-Nepal War. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/6.1/004. c.1792. Letter to Yug phyogs thub (and other military leaders) from the Chinese (at Phag ri) ordering them to participate in the invasion of Nepal in 1792 and to bring their armies to where the Chinese minister is camped so as to coordinate the attack. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/6.1/006. post 1792. Letter from Amban to Sikkimese regarding the Sikkim-Nepal border. The letter states that Sikkim should have been given more land and if Sikkim and Nepal do not agree to this boundary line then they must follow the border established during the time of the Sixth Dalai Lama. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/6.1/007. post 1792. A letter offering gifts to the Sikkimese from the Amban in recognition of Sikkim's role in the Sino-Nepal War. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/9.2/001. c.1814–1816. Letters to David Scott (collector at Rangpur) regarding the taking of Nag ri fort by the Sikkimese army and the retreat of the Gorkha army. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/9.5/009. 1815–1816. Letter of thanks to the British for supplying weapons and money for the defence of Nag ri. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/7.1/001. Early 19th century. Letter to the East India Company from the Sikkimese court reminding the British of their promise to supply weapons to Sikkim. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

SMPd79. 1819. Sikkimese petition to the British with a historical note. Sikkimese Manuscript Project holdings, provisional document number: SMPd79. 37 lines, cursive document. A brief history of Sikkim, from the migration to Sikkim until the Gorkha invasion, includes important information regarding the settlement of the Sikkim-Nepal border along the Mechi river and Sikkimese objections to the placing of the border.

PD/4.2/002. c.1828. Letter to Captain Lloyd from the Sikkimese court regarding the capture of Morang by Gorkha forces. This letter requests Lloyd to intervene in this dispute. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/006. 1831. Intelligence report from Phag ri informing the Sikkimese that the British are supporting the Ko Ta pa rebellion. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/008. 1831. Letter from Ilam to the Sikkimese military leader (Ru dpon) rDo rje dgra 'dul (Gangtok Kazi) enquiring whether the Sikkimese taxpayers (that were imprisoned by the Ko Ta pa/Gorkha) have been freed. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/010. 1831. Royal decree from Chos rgyal Gtsug phug rnam rgyal. It states that in 1830 Rdo rje dgra 'dul was sent to free Sikkimese taxpayers captured during the Ko Ta pa rebellion, but could only free 13 people. It also notes that Chinese and Tibetan officials have been informed. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/011. 1831. Letter from the Chos rgyal to 'Bar myag blon po regarding the supply of money and weapons to Sikkim by the British during the Ko Ta pa rebellion. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/013a. 1832. An official order from the Tibetan government (in response to a request made by the Sikkimese Chos rgyal), in which it states that the Ko Ta pa rebels should return to the Sikkimese fold. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/013b. 1832. Letter from the Chos rgyal to Tibetan authorities informing them of the Ko Ta pa rebellion (generally) and (more specifically) that the Tibetan representative from Phag ri was prevented from entering Sikkim by forces loyal to the Ko Ta pa. It then states that the land of around 3000 Sikkimese subjects was burnt by the Ko Ta pa, resulting in the death of many of these people. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/016. c.1830s. Letter from the Chos rgyal informing the Chinese and Tibetan officials that the Gorkha government will not allow Chinese or Tibetan officials to travel to the Sikkim-Nepal border. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/4.2/019. c.1830s. Copy of letters sent by the Sikkimese to the British. One of which is a letter to the British official at Rangpur, informing him of the Ko Ta pa rebellion and that the king wishes to punish the "criminals" and as such has requested the king of Nepal to act against the insurgents. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology).

PD/1.1/020. 1860. From the Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology). This document is a letter to the bcu dpon Zhal bha 'dur informing him to collect land taxes, assist the government and refrain from abusing the *mi ser* under his control and abide by the government regulations.

PD/1.1/032. 1895. From the Sikkimese Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology). This document is about the tax on summer trade collected by Yang thang Kazi from the Lho, Mon and Gtsong of Bkra shis lding.

Blo bzang chos ldan. 1899. *Gling mo chronicle*. Sikkimese Manuscript holding SMP343. 134 hand written dbus can pages with notes in dbus med, in bound diary form. This text is a brief year by year account of Tibetan and Sikkimese history, compiled by the famous engineer Blo bzang chos ldan after his award of the Gling mo estate, from the British Political officer J.C. White in 1899.

PD/5.3/007. From the Royal Archives, Gangtok (now housed in The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology). This document is regarding the eastern borders of Sikkim with Bhutan and the transfer of Sikkimese and Bhutanese prisoners to their home countries. Date unknown. 23 lines (with additions), cursive document.

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